

ESSAYS

UPON

Several SUBJECTS.

In Five Parts.

Upon Wit.

Upon false Virtue.

Upon the Immortality of the Soul.

Upon the Laws of Nature.

Upon the Origin of Civil Power.

BY

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THE PREFACE.

AN *Essay* is an instructive Writing, either in Prose or Verse, distinguish'd from compleat Treatises and voluminous Works, by its shorter Extent and less accurate Method. It is natural for Men to desire the Acquisition of Knowledge by the most easy and expeditious Ways, and therefore few Persons have been so patient of Labour and Application, as to be delighted with prolix Compositions, in which, the main Design of the Author being long suspended, the Discourse grows so tedious to many, that they imagine it will never be finish'd. But the Disrelish of such diffusive Pieces in these Times is more universal, and carry'd so far, that great Books are look'd on as oppressive, and by their Bulk, concluded to be dull and spiritless; while those in which the principal End, as well as the Sentiments of the Author, are contracted into a narrower Compass, if well writ, meet with general Approbation. And if it happens that a large Volume is well receiv'd in the present Age, it must be adorned with Variety of Matter, as well as pure Diction, and wrought up to a great Degree of Perfection, otherwise the Reader is discourag'd, and throws it by as too painful a Task to be undertaken.

Whether this Delicacy proceeds from a more refin'd and elegant Taste, or an indolent and unactive Temper of
A 2 Mind,

Mind, I shall not here examine ; but in Fact, the Observation is so just, that not only long and methodical Systems of Divinity, Natural Philosophy, Morals and Medicine are grown disagreeable, but likewise voluminous Romances, the delight of the past Age, are no longer demanded, but lie by as neglected Lumber in the Shops, while short Novels and Tales are become the common Entertainment of those who are pleas'd with Fictions of that Nature. And should it be granted, that this arises from a greater and more universal Relish of Polite Literature, I am afraid that the principal Interests of Learning, and the Advancement of solid Knowledge will suffer by it. There is that Connexion, Dependence, and beautiful Order of the Parts in a perfect Body of Science, that it is impossible to contemplate the whole Structure but in a lame and imperfect View, when the Members of it are sever'd and disunited, as they are in small Discourses. If the relation of one Proposition to another, and the coherent Train of Conclusions are not discern'd by the Mind, there must follow a great Confusion and Obscurity of Ideas ; and at best those Men, for want of full and comprehensive Conceptions of Things, will only perceive some scatter'd Branches of Truth, and form but a dim and defective Sketch of any Art or System of Knowledge.

Should a barbarous *Indian*, who had never seen a Palace or a Ship, view their separate and disjointed Parts drawn by the Pen or Pencil, and observe the Pillars, Doors, Cornices, and Turrets of one, and the Prow, Stern, Ribs, and Masts of the other, he would be able to form but a very lame and dark Idea of either of those Inventions. In like manner those, who contemplate only the Fragments or Pieces broken off from any Science, dispers'd in short unconnected Discourses, and do not discern their relation to each other, and how they may be adapted, and by their Union procure the delightful Symmetry of a regular Scheme, can never survey an entire Body of Truth, but must view it as deform'd and dismember'd ; while their Ideas, which must be always indistinct and often repugnant, will lie in the Brain unsorted, and thrown together without Order and

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and Coherence. But since the Taste of the Times is so nice and delicate, and their Temper so impatient of long Application, those who would convey Instruction to their Minds, must accommodate their Writings to this prevailing Inclination, must possess themselves of those Avenues that lie open and lead with ease to their Understanding, and change their Method of Address when it grows disagreeable, for another that meets with a better Reception. He must be a very morose Physician, that when the Form of his Medicines begins to grow ungrateful and nauseous, will not alter it, or direct a new Vehicle, by which they may be taken down with less Reluctance.

And since Discourses contracted into a narrow room, if they are wrote with Strength and Perspicuity, and contain Variety of good Sense, are more acceptable to Readers, by not putting them to too much Labour and Attention; it must for that Reason be acknowledg'd, that their usefulness is more diffusive than that of long and elaborate Volumes; and tho they do not exhibit Truth in such a clear and perfect Scheme, nor set it in so full a Light, as it appears in a large and methodical System, they are however, very beneficial, and promote the Interests of Literature and Vertue. And since, as I have said, most Men take greater delight in this manner of Writing than in prolix and unweildy Productions, whose enormous Size puts them in a Fright, to gratify the general Taste, as well as to avoid all Affectation of the Air of the Schools, and Ostentation of Learning, many Gentlemen have apply'd themselves to write in a more concise and elegant, tho a less instructive and scholastick manner.

The most celebrated *English* Authors of Essays are, the Lord *Verulam* and Sir *William Temple*; and tho Mr. *Locke* has given that Appellation to his Book on *Human Understanding*, yet that Title seems to be prefix'd from a real or an affected Modesty; for by its Extent, as well as accuracy and methodical Composure, it may justly be reckon'd among large and compleat Treatises.

Men by Writing in this close and short way, prevent their being tedious to the Reader, who desires often to
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take Breath, and to be reliev'd from Satiety by frequent Rests : And as they find, that not being fetter'd by Terms of Art and the Method and Rules of School-men, they are at liberty to write in a more polite and ornamental Style, so they are able to infuse into a contracted Work more Life and Energy, while, like the Chymist, by evaporating the superfluous and insipid Phlegm, they can draw into a little Room the pure and active Spirit.

Believing that I am oblig'd to employ my Talents, such as they are, for publick Good, I have, in conformity to the prevailing Disposition of the People, express'd my Sentiments on the several Subjects of the following Dissertations in a less extensive manner, than otherwise I should have done ; in which I have impartially pursu'd the Interest of Truth and Vertue, without a Design of pleasing or provoking Any.

Some Gentlemen have objected to my former Writings, and they will have no less reason to object against a great Part of these, that they contain too great a Mixture of Religion, without which predominant and disagreeable Ingredient, in their Judgment, my Performances would have met with a more universal Approbation ; while others censure them not so much for introducing Divine Subjects, but for treating them in too Technical a way, that is, by coming too near the manner proper to the Gown, and the Air of the Pulpit. To the first I make this Reply, That the Books which gave Offence to some, by having too high a Seasoning of Religion in general, and too strong a Taste of Christian Sentiments, were the Epick Poems which I have given to the Publick.

But if Gentlemen would reflect and enter into the Nature of an Epick Poem, they wou'd soon be convinc'd that Pious and Divine Subjects are essential and necessary to this sublime Species of Poetry, which was invented and constituted for the Praise and Honour of the Gods and God-like Men, to celebrate the admirable Works and Perfections of the one, and the great Atchievements and beneficial Inventions of the other. *Homer's Illiad* and *Ulysses* are at least as full of the Heathen, as my Poems are of the

the Christian Theology ; yet I never heard he was censur'd for introducing Divine Subjects and Actions ; the for transgressing the Bounds of Decency and Probability in the Conduct of his Machines, he has been condemn'd.

The essential Character of *Virgil's Hero*, is Piety ; and lest you should not discover it by his Actions, he frequently tells you so himself *Sum Pius Æneas, I am pious Æneas*. If then the principal Quality of the Hero may be Piety, the Poet will be oblig'd through his whole Work, to exhibit him to the Reader under that Idea ; which cannot be done, but by introducing him always speaking and acting in such a divine Manner, as keeps up the uniformity of the Character in which he first appear'd : And this *Virgil* has for the most part observ'd, and where at any Time he has neglected to do so, he has transgress'd an indispenible Rule of Epick Poetry. Now should any Poet in this Age, in imitation of *Virgil*, chuse to celebrate a Hero under the Idea of Pious, must he not represent him as such, and make his Poem all over Religious ? And if it fell out that this Poet was a Christian, and wrote in a Country where that Institution was establish'd, must he not acquit himself according to his own Scheme of Theology, as the antient Poets wrote according to theirs ? *Homer* and *Virgil* writ up to the full Measure of Divine Knowledge which they had acquir'd, and in conformity to the Notions of Religion which then obtain'd in the World ; and by a parity of Reason, a Christian Poet is oblig'd to observe the same Rule. But I shall dismiss this Subject here.

I am conscious that three sorts of Persons have been displeas'd with my Writings upon the Account before-mention'd ; the Impious in Principle, that denies the Divine Being ; the Unbeliever, who renounces the Christian Institution ; and the Libertine, who professes his Belief of that reveal'd Religion, but refuses Obedience to its Precepts.

As to the first, it is to me an unaccountable Paradox why an Atheist, to whom all Religions are alike, should not be as well entertain'd with the Beauties of a Poem contriv'd according to the Christian, as of one that is
written

written upon the Plan of the Heathen Theology. But the Infidel, who disclaims the Belief of Divine Revelation, while he asserts the Existence of a Deity, has, I acknowledge Reason to dislike and decry the Poems that are form'd upon the Scheme of the Christian Institution; for that being in his Judgment an imaginary and groundless System, he looks upon himself oblig'd to oppose it with his utmost Efforts: And this, perhaps, is the true Reason, why many Gentlemen cannot bear the Introduction of Christian Machines into Heroick Works, nor the Mixture of that Religion in any other Species of Poetry; but insist with great Vehemence, that let Poets be ever so much Christians in their Opinion and Practice, they ought however to be pagans in their Writings; and not to take their Machines, or borrow their Ornaments from that Theology which they believe to be true, but from that which they are sure is false; because in that, say they, a Poet may shine, but must be very heavy in the other. Admirable Reasoning! who can resist the Force of such a clear and convincing way of arguing?

As to the third sort, it is at first View surprizing that any Man who owns the Truth of the Christian Institution, should disrelish any Performance on this Account, that it is designed to promote the Honour of that Religion which he himself professes; but if we search the Matter deeper, the reason of this will appear very evident; many, who acknowledge the Divine Authority of Revelation, have no Taste of the Vertues enjoin'd by it, but live in open Defiance and Contradiction to its Laws, that is, they believe like Christians but act like Atheists, they cannot therefore read a Writing with satisfaction, which causes in their Minds uneasy Reflections, and upbraids them with the great dissimilitude and deformity between their Profession and their Actions; upon this account they deride the Works of Gentlemen which recommend Piety and Vertue, as Cant and Hypocrisy, and give them the Name of *Preaching*, which in their Opinion is an ignominious Term, and very unbecoming the Character of a Christian Gentleman.

But I have another Reply to the above-mention'd Objection, namely, that I look upon it as an Expence of Time, for which I should not be able to account, if the Propagation of just Notions of Religion, and a Conformity of Manners to such Notions, were not the principal End that engag'd me in Writing; were I ever so capable of the Province, I should not esteem it a valuable Consideration for my Labour, only to entertain the Fancies of Men with Wit, and make them laugh with facetious Conceits. To communicate to the Minds of others noble and elevated Ideas to inspire them with pious Ardor and Divine Passions, and push them on to a vigorous Resolution of engaging and persevering in a Series of vertuous Actions, becoming the Dignity of their Nature and the Precepts of their Religion, is a praise-worthy Province; for this is to be employ'd about the most excellent Objects for the Attainment of the most important Ends; and I would chuse rather in this Sense to be the Author of Good, tho but to ten Persons, than by the happiest strains of Wit and the most pleasant Humour to divert and recreate Ten Thousand; notwithstanding I were sure to make many Enemies by the first, and by the last to gain universal Applause. It was for this reason I began to write, and shall be well pleas'd to die with my Pen in my Hand, asserting the Honour of the Divine Being and the Interest of Mankind, which I know I am doing while I vindicate the Cause of Religion and Vertue. I have been impell'd by a disinterested and undesigning Principle to engage on the Side I have taken, and if I had entertain'd any indirect and mean Views, I should have chosen other ways to accomplish my End, than by Writing on such Subjects and in such a manner, that I was well assur'd would draw upon me the Resentments of great Numbers of no inconsiderable Figure. These Gentlemen should, however be induc'd to pardon a well-meant Zeal; while to do them the highest Service, by setting their Judgment right in a Matter of the greatest Concern, I have adventur'd to incur their Displeasure, whose Favour and Countenance might have done me Honour, protected my Reputation, and promoted my Interest:

It is because I as really wish their Felicity as I do my own, that I attempt to cure their erroneous Principles, which, if not rectify'd, must be attended with the most fatal Consequence.

Being fully convinc'd that no solid Satisfaction can be attain'd, but that which arises from a consciousness of doing Good, and the expectation of a future Reward, and (it is with great Satisfaction that I certainly foresee that all Men living, whatever they think now, will in a short Time be of the same Opinion) I shall still employ what Capacities I have, and for which I am accountable, in pursuit of the same Ends to which I have all along directed my Aim; and if for adhering stedfast to the Divine Cause of Religion I am villify'd by Gentlemen of impious or unchristian Maxims, I am so hard and impenitent that I shall still endeavour to be viler, being ambitious to merit their Displeasure to a greater Degree, and recommend my self yet more to their Contempt.

The more I advance in Years, and the nearer the future State is presented to my View, the more I am pleas'd with reflecting on what I have written on Divine and Moral Subjects; and whatever Appellation of Reproach Men of pleasure think fit to give to this Disposition of Mind, they cannot enjoy so great Satisfaction in deriding it, as the possession of it gives to me. Tho' I despair of changing the Judgments of the determin'd and inflexible Leaders of Impiety, yet I am not without hopes of being useful to younger Men, who are only wavering and unsettled in their Opinions, or in whose Minds loose and unchristian Principles are not deeply rooted.

This was always look'd upon as a good natur'd Nation well dispos'd to Religion and receptive of vertuous Impressions; and tho' one cannot without Astonishment see the wonderful Progress that Profaneness and Immorality, have made among us, yet I flatter my self that it is but an acute and temporary Distemper, being so much against the native Constitution of the People, that I hope is still strong enough to throw off by degrees this malignant Ferment, which if it be unable to do, the Event must be deplorable.

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plorable. We cannot but be sensible how much we owe our present Sufferings and Calamities to the prevailing Power of Irreligion and Vice, that have in so terrible a degree over-spread a Kingdom once renown'd for Piety and sober Life; and it I am not mistaken, should impious Maxims and their genuine Fruit, dissolute Manners, which Heaven avert, be carry'd yet to a greater Height, and spread their unrestrain'd Influence to a greater extent, the Consequence, to our sad Experience, will prove destructive. But I shall not enlarge on this Head, intending to publish a Discourse, in which I shall trace the Origin of Atheism, and deduce the Succession of its Assertors and Patrons through every Age to these Times, I shall make it appear, that Impiety has a direct tendency to subvert the Foundations of all human Societies, and expose the false Reasoning of Mr. Bayle, who maintains the contrary Opinion.

Besides, let Gentlemen of Irreligious Principles reflect on the freedom which they themselves use: Have they a Right to deride and affront Religion? so have I to defend its Honour: Are they at liberty to proselize Christians to Paganism? so am I to convert Pagans to Christianity: In maintaining and spreading their Opinions have they no unwarrantable Ends in view, no Vanity, no irregular Passions, no voluptuous Appetites to gratify? I am compell'd to boast, no more have I. Seeing then they believe they are privileg'd to expose Religion and Virtue among their Acquaintance, for the Peace and Happiness of the Nation; for that, as they pretend, is the Mark at which they aim; why should I offend by asserting religious Maxims and the Divine Authority of the Christian Institution, the establish'd Worship of the Country where I live, which I look upon as so conducive to the publick Good, that without their Assistance the strongest Pillars of Civil Communities must be destroy'd.

If it be said that there is a venerable Order of Men appropriated to this sacred Office, of instructing the People in the Notions of Religion, and persuading them to yield Obedience to Moral and Christian Obligations; and that therefore it is owing to a presumptuous Curiosity, that I

have taken a Fancy to trouble my self about Affairs of this nature ; I answer, that notwithstanding there is such an establish'd Order separated from secular Employment to attend the Service of the Altar, of whom many by their excellent Labours and exemplary Lives have propagated Religion, adorn'd the Church, and been the Authors of great Good to their Country ; yet that does not hinder but others who have competent Talents, may employ them in their Station, for the Instruction and Improvement of Mankind in Piety and Moral Goodness. It is every Man's Duty in his private Sphere, as well as the Divine in his publick and more extensive Capacity, to promote religious Knowledge and a Love of Vertue ; but let it be consider'd, that notwithstanding the venerable Clergy are appropriated to this Province, yet many eminent Persons of that Order have in all Times believ'd, that without any sacrilegious Violation of their holy Function, they might alienate a great part of their Lives from the Service of the Church, to which they are consecrated, while they attended on secular Affairs : Many have held great Offices of State, and many have been publick Ministers in Foreign Countries, and several have for many Years in other Employments discontinu'd, the Duties of their sacred Calling, and have nevertheless preserv'd, at least in their own Opinion, their indelible Character ; and not a few of the Reverend Clergy give their Neighbours Advice in Cases of Physick and Law, as well as in those of Conscience. Now if the Guides of the Church condescend to take such care of our Welfare in secular Concerns, why may not a Lay-man, in his Turn, express his Gratitude and Good-will by serving the Church in Matters of Religion. Besides, it should be consider'd, that a Gentleman has this one Advantage over the Clergy, That when he writes for the Instruction and Improvement of the People in Religion and Vertue, he is look'd upon as undesigning and disinterested ; and it cannot be suspected that he writes for a Party, or that he is Mercenary, and aims at Riches and Promotion.

For my farther Vindication it may be alledg'd, that in
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the Pagan World before the Christian Revelation, *Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, Cicero*, and all the eminent Writers on Divine and Moral Subjects were learned Men, not consecrated to the Service of the Temple ; and after the Christian Worship was instituted, many Lay-Professors of it, in the Primitive Times, as well as Multitudes in the Modern, have, with great Approbation and Applause, vindicated the Truth of their Religion, and promoted the Interests of Vertue by their valuable Labours. How many, besides the Clergy, have given to the Publick Expositions on the Sacred Volumes, as well as Moral and Divine Contemplations, which are receiv'd with great Esteem ; nor did I ever hear, that any Gentleman has been condemn'd for Writing on such Subjects, how many so ever have been censur'd for not Writing well.

As to the second Objection mention'd at the beginning of this Discourse, That when I introduce Divine Subjects, I am too Technical, and do not observe the fashionable Stile of a Gentleman, but approach too near to the manner of the Gown ; I must own, that if some of my former Writings have been obnoxious to this Censure, I have reason to apprehend that many Places in the following Essays will lie more expos'd to that critical Observation, and therefore I shall here make the same Apology for the one and the other. It will appear to the judicious Reader, that I have not imitated the Method, nor us'd the Phrases appropriated to the Discourses of the Reverend Clergy and the Eloquence of the Pulpit, but have vary'd the one, and frequently cast the other into different Forms of Distinction ; but if the Objectors mean, that I am too warm and appear too much in earnest, that I affect the Language of the Heart, and do not strive to please the Imagination with delicate Touches, spritful Turns of Expression, and new Speculations which only hover in the Brain, without sinking deep enough to disturb the Reader with uneasy Reflections, excite Divine Passions, and produce generous Resolutions to engage in the Practice of Vertue ; if, I say, the Objectors mean that this is the way of Writing becoming a Gentleman, I freely acknowledge that I do
not

not aim at that Honour ; I am not ambitious of the Character of a Polite but a useful Writer ; which I imagine I cannot be, if under the Confinements before-mention'd.

I have heard a Clerg^y-man censur'd for saying, that he look'd upon it as a very uncivil Thing for a Divine in the Pulpit to scare the Audience by mentioning Damnation, Hell, and other such Terms of Horror. This fine Orator must surely think that the rude and boisterous way of Preaching, in which the Words and Phrases of the Sacred Writings are employ'd, ought to be left off by polite and well-manner'd Christians ; and that notwithstanding the Apostles, who were rough and unrefin'd, and had little Taste of Elegance, good Breeding, and ingenious Conversation, might be allow'd such harsh and frightful Expressions, yet they would not become a modern civiliz'd Pulpit. Nevertheless one would think, that since these Men acknowledge that the Primitive Planters of Christianity were directed by an infallible Spirit, they should not be mistaken in the Nature of Evangelical Eloquence, and the right Art of Persuasion, and therefore that it would be a pardonable Condescension in such an accomplish'd Preacher if he thought fit to follow the Examples of Men under the Guidance of Divine Inspiration.

Mankind by their inbred Propensions, strengthen'd and improv'd by a Series of evil Actions, are so strongly prepossess'd in favour of forbidden Enjoyments, and so much prejudic'd against the disagreeable Practice of Virtue, while the Exercise of their Reason is suspended or corrupted, that the soft and gentle Persuasions and well-bred Address of a meer elegant Writer will make no more Impression on their Minds, than the Descent of a Feather upon the Ground, or a gentle Breeze upon a Rock. If a Man has a mind to combat Profaneness and Immorality, Enemies not easy to be vanquish'd, he must be furnish'd with Arms that will cut as well as glitter ; and he might as well enter the Lists quite naked, as provided only with bright but edgeless Weapons.

It is certain, that those do engage in a worthy and generous Design, who endeavour to reclaim Persons of dis-

disorderly and profligate Behaviour, and to make Vice appear so dangerous and detestable that it may be abhor'd, and Vertue so amiable, that it may exert its attractive Force and invite Mankind to the practice of it : But then this is a Province attended with so many and great Difficulties, that setting aside the indispensible Obligations of Reason and Christian Charity, it would not be so discreet and prudent, as it is Heroick and Honourable to attempt it, while the Approaches to the Understandings of Men are generally so bar'd and guarded against Instruction, that for the most part they are inaccessible.

But notwithstanding it is a melancholy Truth, that the Depravity of Human Nature is so great that it is a very difficult Task to undertake the Cure, yet to give over Mankind as deplorable and incapable of Moral Improvements is to carry the Matter too far : It is true, that Princes have the most effectual and extensive Power for this purpose, and the venerable Clergy, who are abstracted from the World, disengag'd from secular Employments, and set apart to this high Calling, have, next to Princes, the greatest Capacity and Advantages to sink the Reputation of Vice, and propagate the Esteem and Love of Vertue ; nevertheless, private Persons may, in their circumscrib'd Station, be useful in promoting Religion and Morality, tho not to so great a degree ; and if they may be so, who can excuse them if they do not attempt it.

As to the means of procuring this End I am of Opinion, that the ingenious and polite Discourses upon Divine Subjects, in which the Authors endeavour to dissuade Men from the practice of Vice, by shewing the unreasonableness of its Nature, and representing in a handiome manner, the Temporal Inconveniencies that attend it, as the loss of Honour, Health, and Riches, tho ever so elegant and entertaining, are not sufficient to reform a loose Age, and recover the Power and Reputation of Divine Vertues. Degenerate Man has such a native Indisposition and Reluctance to the Practice of Religion, that in this respect he is often represented in sacred and prophane Writings under the figurative Idea of a dead Person. Now is it in any degree

gree probable, that such Men should owe a new Life and moral Resurrection to Discourses on religious Subjects, which, tho correct and polite, are wrote in a cold didactic and impassionate manner, and therefore never shake the false Notions and Prepossessions of the Offender ; never awaken him with the Prospect of his Danger, nor work him up to a Resolution of parting with his forbidden Enjoyments. I acknowledge I cannot see any harm in these Discourses, wherein the Writers, besides their beautiful and ornamental Stile, have this peculiar Character of the Gentleman, that they make no body uneasy, but with great Tenderness and Caution avoid all Sentiments and harsh Expressions, that are likely to alarm and disturb the Criminal ; nor can I discern their usefulness farther, than that they please and entertain.

The inveterate Diseases of the Mind are as hard to be remov'd as those of the Body ; and therefore their Cures requires as sharp and painful Applications. Will a Man in a profound Lethargy be awaken'd with Whispers and soft Musick, that can sleep in a Storm, and is undisturb'd with Thunder ? Will a violent Fever yield to the Art of the Confessioner, after the Skill of the Physician is in vain exhausted ? Or must a Surgeon who is employ'd to heal a mortifying Limb and stop the spreading Gangrene, be disarm'd of his cutting Instruments and corrosive Medicines, and be permitted only to sooth the Suffering Part with scented Waters and pleasant Balsams ? Is it likely that an immoral Person should become the Convert of a genteel Satire or an elegant Harangue, who is deaf and inexorable to the Tears and Entreaties of his Relations, and perseveres in his expensive Vices till he has finish'd the Ruin of his disconsolate Family ? Is it credible, that a dissolute Youth that has given the Reins to his inordinate Appetites, and plung'd himself in forbidden Pleasures, should be reclaim'd by the power of a polite offenceless Performance, who is not prevail'd upon by the terrible Consequences of his criminal Enjoyments ? Can the Stings of Satire, and the Reproaches of a Man of Wit, pierce deeper into his Heart, than those of Remorse and conscious Reflection, and the painful

painful Sense of wasting Diseases, the sad Fruits of his vicious Courses?

To conclude this Head. I am convinc'd that Discourses on Divine and Moral Subjects, let them be the Productions of ever so fine Imagination and Genius, and ever so valuable for Purity of Words, beautiful Expression, accurate Style, and worthy Sentiments, if the Author does not strive to penetrate the Heart, and by the only prevalent Arguments taken from the endless Misery that attends the Practice of Vice in a Future Life; if he does not grapple and contend with the Criminal, and set his Danger before him in a strong Light, so as to disturb him in his presumptuous Opinions, wrest from him his false Hopes, and fill his Mind with just Fear of Divine Punishment, those Discourses, I say, must be unavailing, being incompetent and unequal to their End. It is evident, that the Menaces of Divine Displeasure and unspeakable Sufferings in a Future State, tho' they prevail upon some, yet are ineffectual and unoperative upon the generality of Mankind; and therefore all other Means whatever that are employ'd, to persuade Men to be Virtuous, which are infinitely of less force than those, must certainly be fruitless and insignificant.

And here I think it not improper to take Notice, that since all supream Magistrates guard their Laws by the Sanction of Punishment, by which they aim to secure the Obedience of the Subject, and in such a proportion as they judge sufficient to attain their End, the Divine Legislator of the World, by annexing to his Laws eternal Sufferings to deter Men from Disobedience, has not exceeded a just Measure, since in Fact it sadly appears that those Punishments are insufficient to prevail with the greatest part of Mankind to obey his Will; and therefore it is too evident that this threaten'd Penalty does not surpass a due Proportion; for whatever Means are too weak to acquire their End, cannot be said to be immoderate and excessive.

Notwithstanding the unsuccessful Efforts of Persons of all Denominations, to stop the licentious Tide of Impiety and Vice might, with Reason, discourage private Persons from making any future Attempts, yet I am so hardy as

not utterly to despair of being beneficial to the Nation by pursuing that Design. I have therefore in my *Essay upon Wit*, reviv'd my old Controversy with the Stage; the Entertainments of which, as they are still manag'd, are highly prejudicial to the Interests of Religion and Vertue, as having an apparent tendency to produce profane Principles and Corruption of Manners. My chief Objection is against the Comick Poems, for the Tragick are become for the most Part, not only clean and inoffensive, but in some Instances instructive and useful, especially *Tamerlane*, *Cato*, and the Lady *Jane Grey*; which besides their other great Beauties, abound with excellent Moral and Divine Sentiments. I have in the following *Essay upon Wit*, shew'd how that Talent is abus'd and prostituted to unworthy Purposes in Dramatick Performances, and what a pernicious Influence it must needs have while so employ'd, on the Minds and Actions of Men. I know it is alledg'd in Detence of our Comedies, that they are proper to expose the Fool, and reform the Libertine, to recommend Decency and Vertue, and put Foppery and Immorality out of Countenance. But as to the Correction of Vice and propagating Sobriety of Manners, it is evident by long Experience, that it has not that Effect in any degree, and indeed it is not an adequate and competent Means for that End.

If general Discourses, as I have shown on the Beauty and Benefits of Vertue, and the Turpitude and Inconveniences of Vice, that only float on the Surface of the Brain and please the Imagination, but do not warm the Heart and excite generous and Divine Passions, let them be writ with ever so much Elegance and Dignity, are insignificant, as being incapable to reclaim a dissolute People; can it be thought that our modern Comedies will be more effectual?

If the greatest Danger imaginable set before Men in the fullest View, and the most patherick and importunate Manner will not deter them from Vice, what can we expect that Jest and Ridicule should do? These are not a Match for the criminal Inclinations of Nature ripen'd into Habits, and confirm'd by long Custom.

Tho a well writ Comedy may not only become an agreeable Diversion, and in some measure beneficial, by correcting the Indecencies and exposing the Follies and inferior Faults of Mankind; yet the Comick Poet must have a very languine Complexion, that can hope with such feeble and unequal Weapons, to triumph over Vice and Immorality. To endeavour to cure an Age over-spread with degenerate and licentious Manners by such ways, is to expreis great Ignorance of Human Nature, and the Power of inordinate Appetites. One may as well charge a Gyant with a Bull-rush, or play upon a Conflagration with a Syringe, as attempt to make a wise and vertuous Nation with pleasant Humour and facetious Fancies.

I do not believe that the most celebrated Comedies, how much soever they have entertain'd the Audience, have reduc'd any Libertine, or improv'd any Coxcomb. Let the famous Author of the *Tatlers* and *Spectators* declare his Experience, who, if Wit could have made Men wiser, must certainly have succeeded; that Gentleman says, in one of his Discouries, *I have many Readers, but few Converts*; I believe he might have said none: For it is my Opinion, that all his fine Baillery and Satire, tho admirable in their kind, never reclaim'd one vicious Man, or made one Fool depart from his Folly.

As to the *Essay upon False Vertue*, when I reflect that loose Principles and dissolute Manners, have spread to Astonishment, their malignant Contagion among the People, and have so far prevail'd, that in a great degree the essential Dissimilitude of good and bad Actions is effac'd in the Minds of Men, and Vertue and Vice begin to look kind and friendly upon one another, as if they had compriss'd their old Disputes, and had brought their Controversy to an amicable Conclusion; while the reputed Atheist and the Christian, the Libertine and the sober Man, the dissolute Woman and one of unblemish'd Reputation, shall caress each other, freely converse together, mutually make and receive Visits with all the Marks of Respect and Friendship, and communicate with one another in the most sacred and awful Mysteries of our Religion; while I con-

templated, I say, this amazing Degeneracy, I concluded that Vice and Immorality had lost their intrinsic Deformity, and wip'd off their moral Turpitude in the general Opinion of the People ; and therefore I cannot but think, that it is a commendable Undertaking to attempt the Correction of a Mistake of such Consequence.

Men of irreligious Principles and loose Behaviour, have sometimes told their Acquaintance in Conversation, that they could not believe they were sincere and in good Earnest, when they profess'd their Belief of the Christian Institution, and have express'd their Reasons in this manner ; Were it our stedfast Opinion, that the Doctrine and Precepts, as well as the Sanction of endless Pain and Misery contain'd in the Christian System, were establish'd by the Authority of Divine Revelation, we would feed on Bread and Water, despise Wealth and Power, and renounce the most tempting Enjoyments that gratify our Senses, rather than indulge our selves in the Practice of the most pleasant Sins : And it is so agreeable to the Instincts of Nature and the Dictates of Reason, rather to forbear a transient Satisfaction, than to expose one's self to Divine Wrath and Everlasting Sufferings ; that we cannot imagine how it is possible that you should really assent to the Truth of Christianity, and yet live a Life so repugnant to your Creed. This is indeed a smart and cutting Expostulation ; and but two Things can be alledg'd in Answer to it ; one is this, That many sincerely assent, tho in a low and unprevailing Degree, to the Truth of the Christian Institution ; but their Belief is so much born down and over-power'd by the criminal Propensions of corrupt Nature and evil acquir'd Habits, that their Actions bear no Conformity to the Rules of the Religion which they profess. Another is, that many have such crude and erroneous Notions of the Nature of Christian Virtues and their opposite Vices, that tho they really act in contradiction to their Religion, yet they are not conscious of that Inconsistency, and do not know that they are Christians only in Name, and not in Reality ; and therefore to convince them of the Absurdity of their Sentiments on a Subject of this Importance, I have

have endeavour'd in this *Essay*, to set the Matter in a true Light ; where I have demonstrated, that the Essence of Moral Goodness and the Divine Simplicity of Religion, consist in the Rectitude of the Intellectual Faculties, and the predominant Purity of the Heart, whence Streams of beautiful and praise-worthy Actions constantly flow, which have no genuine Vertue in themselves, let the Matter of them be ever so shining, but what they derive from their inward Fountain.

I have already laid down this Position, That it is in vain to persuade a bad Person to correct his Life and become a virtuous Man, that is, one who acts from a Principle of Obedience to the Divine Being, and conforms himself to his unwritten and reveal'd Laws, with a Prospect of acquiring his perfect Happiness in the Fruition of his Creator, which is the essential and distinguishing Character of a good Man, by any other Motives and Arguments than what are drawn from a Future State of Felicity or Misery. It is true, that some Persons are reclaim'd from vicious and destructive Practices, by the Consideration of the Inconveniences and evil Consequences that attend them in respect of themselves and their Families ; and many more do the same from a Change of Taste that happens in the different Periods of Life, our Relish of Satisfaction and Pleasure being various in Youth, Manhood, and old Age ; but if their better Course of Life and Sobriety of Manners do not spring from that Divine Principle and Regular End above describ'd, they cannot be denominated Good Men. Their degenerate Nature continues the same, and tho the Object is chang'd, their evil Inclinations are unalter'd ; and their Actions, tho for the Matter of them, they make a much better Appearance, are no more in reality virtuous than those before. For this Reason I have, in the *Essay upon the Immortality of the Soul*, endeavour'd to evince the Certainty of a Future State of endless Happiness or Sufferings, as being fully assur'd that no Motives of less Weight will prevail with Men to correct an irregular Life : And I hope I have establish'd this Article by such full and clear Evidence, that it will be acknowledg'd by every impartial

Reader

Reader who will attentively exercise his Reason upon this matter in which his Interest is so much concern'd.

In the *Disertation on the Laws of Nature*, I have drawn the Discourse into as close a room as so copious a Theme will admit, if the Perspicuity of the Style, the natural Dependence and Connexion of the Conclusions, and the convincing Force of the Evidence are preserv'd : and for that Reason I have forbore to cite Opinions of many celebrated Writers upon that Subject, particularly *Suarez*, *Grotius*, and *Puffendorf*, who tho' an Author by many admir'd, is to me often disagreeable and uninstruative, because of his Obscurity and the Confusion of his Ideas. Should I have enter'd into a Dispute with these great Writers, and attempted to lay open their Defects, and confute their erroneous Positions, I shou'd not only have interrupted the Thread of my Discourse, and disappointed my Design of exhibiting in one View, to the Reader, an entire Scheme of my Opinions, but I must likewise have extended it to a greater Length than I thought proper for an *Essay*.

And for the same Reason in the Discourse upon the *Origin of Civil Power*, I have not mention'd the Notions of many Learned Authors, which are contrary to mine, that I might not embroil my self in Controversy, and grow uneasy to the Reader by numerous Citations.

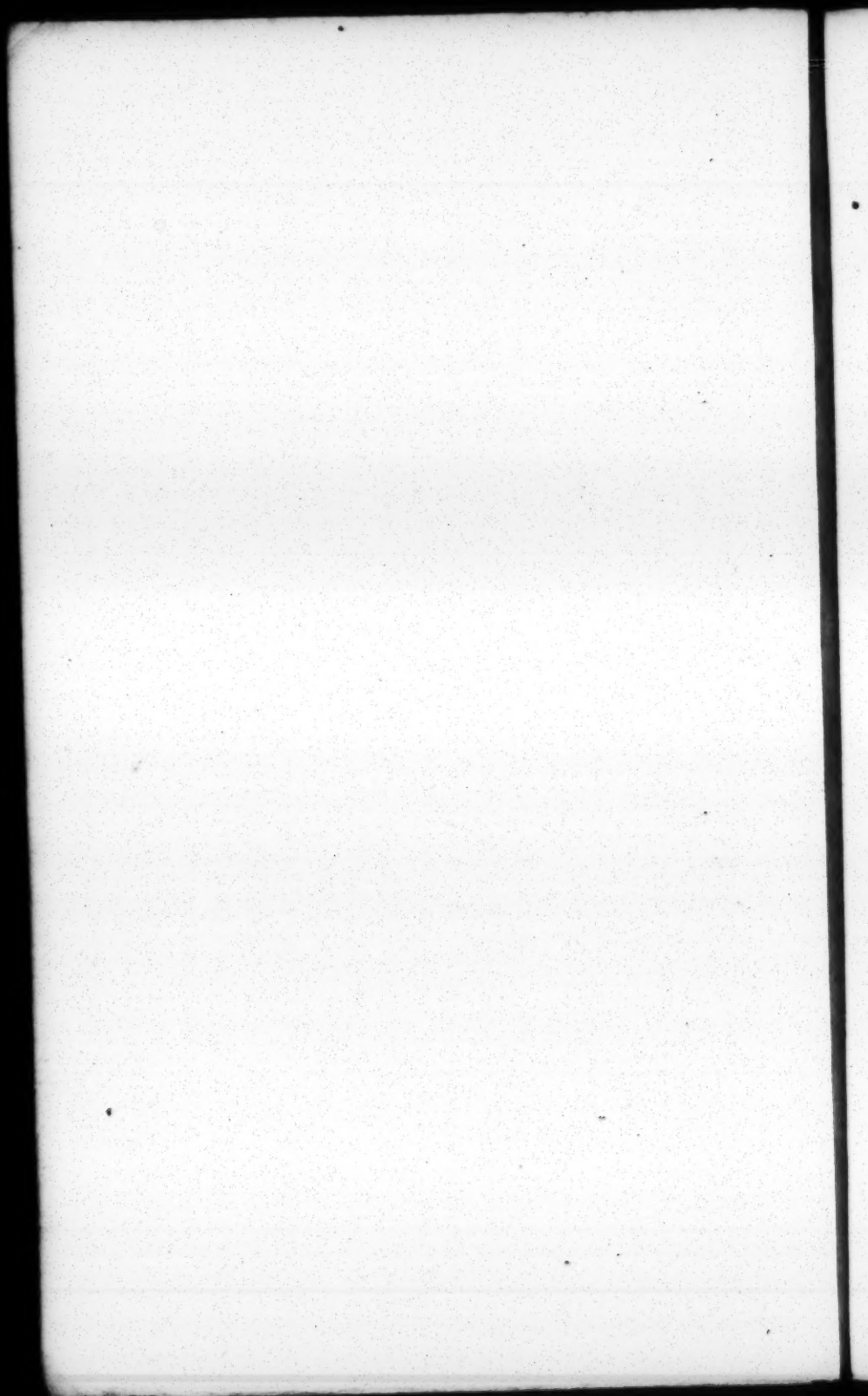
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A N
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B Y
Sir *RICHARD BLACKMORE*, Kt. M. D.
And Fellow of the College of Physicians in
London.

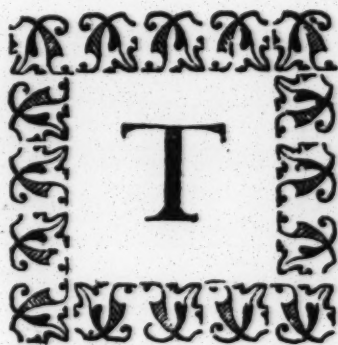


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THE Inclinations of Men, in this their degenerate State, carry them with great Force to those voluptuous Objects, that please their Appetites and gratify their Senses; and which not only by their early Acquaintance and Familiarity, but as they are adapted to the prevailing Instincts of Nature, are more esteem'd and pursu'd than all other Satisfaction. As those inferior Enjoyments, that only affect the Organs of the Body are chiefly coveted, so next to these, that light and facetious Qualification of the Mind, that diverts the Hearers and is proper to pro-

produce Mirth and Alacrity, has, in all Ages, by the greatest Part of Mankind, been admir'd and applauded. No Productions of Human Understandings are receiv'd with such a general Pleasure and Approbation, as those that abound with Wit and Humour, on which the People set a greater Value, than on the wisest and most instructive Discourses. Hence a pleasant Man is always caress'd above a wise one, and Ridicule and Satyr, that entertain the Laughers, often put solid Reason and useful Science out of Countenance. The wanton Temper of the Nation has been gratify'd so long with the high Seasonings of Wit and Raillery in Writing and Conversation, that now almost all Things that are not accommodated to their Relish by a strong Infusion of those Ingredients, are rejected as the heavy and insipid Performances of Men of a plain Understanding and meer Masters of Sense.

SINCE the Power of Wit is so prevalent, and has obtain'd such Esteem and Popularity, that a Man endow'd with this agreeable Quality, is by many look'd on as a Heavenly Being, if compar'd with others, who have nothing but Learning and a clear arguing Head ; it will be worth the while to search into its Nature, and examine its Usefulness, and take a View of those fatal Effects which it produces, when it happens to be misapply'd.

THO' perhaps the Talent which we call Wit, like that of Humour, is as clearly understood by its simple Term, as by the most labour'd Description ; an Argument of which is this, That many ingenious Persons, by their unsuccessful Essays to explain it, have rather obscur'd than illustrated its Idea ; I will notwithstanding adventure to give the
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Definition of it, which tho' it may fall short of Perfection, yet I imagine, will come nearer to it, than any that has yet appear'd. *Wit is a Qualification of the Mind, that raises and enlivens cold Sentiments and plain Propositions, by giving them an elegant and surprizing Turn.*

It is evident, that Wit cannot essentially consist in the Justness and Propriety of the Thoughts, that is, the Conformity of our Conceptions to the Objects we conceive ; for this is the Definition of Truth, when taken in a Physical Sense ; nor in the Purity of Words and Expression, for this may be eminent in the Cold, Didactick Stile, and in the correct Writers of History and Philosophy : But Wit is that which imparts Spirit to our Conceptions and Diction, by giving them a lively and novel, and therefore an agreeable Form : And thus its Nature is limited and diversify'd from all other intellectual Endowments. Wit therefore is the Accomplishment of a warm, sprightly, and fertile Imagination, enrich'd with great Variety of proper Ideas ; which active Principle is however under the Direction of a regular Judgment, that takes care of the Choice of just and suitable Materials, prescribes to the lighter Faculties the due Bounds of their Sport and Activity, and assists and guides them, while they imprint on the Conceptions of the Mind their peculiar and delightful Figures. The Addition of Wit to proper Subjects, is like the artful Improvement of the Cook, who by his exquisite Sauce, gives to a plain Dish, a pleasant and unusual Relish. A Man of this Character works on simple Propositions a rich Embroadery of Flowers and Figures, and imitates the curious Artist who studs and inlays his prepar'd Steel with Devices of Gold and Silver. But Wit is not only
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the Improvement of a plain Piece by intellectual Enameling ; besides this, it animates and warms a cold Sentiment, and makes it glow with Life and Vigour ; and this it effects, as is express'd in the last Part of the Definition, by giving it an elegant and surprizing Turn. It always conveys the Thought of the Speaker or Writer cloath'd in a pleasing, but foreign Dress, in which it never appear'd to the Hearer before, who however had been long acquainted with it ; and this Appearance in the Habit of a Stranger must be admirable, since Surprise naturally arises from Novelty, as Delight and Wonder, Result from Surprise ; which I have more fully explain'd in the former Essay.

As to its efficient Cause ; Wit owes its Production to an extraordinary and peculiar Temperment in the Constitution of the Possessors of it, in which is found a Concurrence of regular and exalted Ferments, and an Affluence of Animal Spirits refin'd and rectify'd to a great Degree of Purity ; whence being endow'd with Vivacity, Brightness and Celerity, as well in their Reflections as direct Motions, they become proper Instruments for the sprightly Operations of the Mind : By which Means the Imagination can with great Facility range the wide Field of Nature, contemplate an Infinite Variety of Objects, and by observing the Similitude and Disagreement of their several Qualities, single out and abstract, and then suit and unite those Ideas, which will best serve its Purpose. Hence beautiful Allusions, surprizing Metaphors, and admirable Sentiments are always ready at hand : And while the Fancy is full of Images collected from innumerable Objects and their different Qualities, Relations and Habitues, it can at Pleasure dress a
common

common Notion in a strange, but becoming Garb; by which, as before observ'd, the same Thought will appear a new one, to the great Delight and Wonder of the Hearer. What we call Genius Results from this particular happy Complexion in the first Formation of the Person that enjoys it, and is Nature's Gift, but diversify'd by various specifick Characters and Limitations, as it's active Fire is blended and allay'd by different Proportions of Phlegm, or reduc'd and regulated by the Contract of opposite Ferments. Therefore, as there happens in the Composition of a facetious Genius a greater or less, tho' still an inferior Degree of Judgement and Prudence, and different Kinds of Instincts and Passions, one Man of Wit will be vary'd and distinguish'd from another. That Distinction that seems common to Persons of this Denomination, is an inferior Degree of Wisdom and Discretion; and tho' these Two Qualities, Wit and Discretion, are almost incapable of a friendly Agreement, and will not, but with great Difficulty, be work'd together and incorporated in the Constitution of any Individual; yet this Observation is not so conspicuous in any, as in those, whose native Complexion come the nearest to a Subversion and Absence of Mind, tho' it should never degenerate into that distemper'd Elevation of the Spirits: Nothing is more common, than to see Persons of this Class always think Right, and always act Wrong; admirable for the Richness, Delicacy, and Brightness of their Imaginations, and at the same Time to be pity'd for their want of Prudence and common Sense; abounding with excellent Maxims and instructive Sentiments, which however are not of the least Use to themselves in the Conduct of their Lives. And hence it is certain, That tho' the Gentlemen
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of a pleasant and witty Turn of Mind, often make the industrious Merchant, and grave Persons of all Professions, the Subjects of their Raillery, and expose them as stupid Creatures, not supportable in good Company ; yet these in their Turn believe they have as great a Right, as indeed they have, to reproach the others for want of Industry, good Sense, and regular Oeconomy, much more valuable Talents than those, which any mere Wit can boast of ; and therefore wise Parents, who from a tender Concern for the Honour and Happiness of their Children, earnestly desire they may excel in intellectual Endowments, should, instead of refin'd Parts, and a Genius turn'd for pleasant Conversation, wish them a solid Understanding and a Faculty of close and clear Reasoning, these Qualifications being likely to make them good Men, and the other only good Companions.

AND this leads to another Observation, namely, That Persons of facetious Talents and agreeable Humours, in whose Temperament, Judgement, and Discretion, as before observ'd, are usually found in a disproportionate Measure, are more inclin'd than others to Levity and dissolute Manners: The same swiftness of Thought, and sprightliness of Imagination, that qualifies them for ingenious Conversation, Sports of Fancy and Comick Writing, do likewise give them an exquisite Taste of sensual Pleasures, and expose them to the prevailing Power of Tempting, tho' forbidden Enjoyments. The Passions and Appetites of these Men, from the same Spring from whence they derive their extraordinary Parts, that is, a Redundancy of warm and lively Spirits, are more violent and impatient of Restraint, than those in a cooler and less active Complexion, who however may be
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more eminent in the superior Faculties of the Mind : Hence it will be no Wonder, that while their Propensions to Pleasure are much stronger, and their Reason much weaker than those of other Men, they should be less able than others, to resist the Allurements of Criminal Delights ; and this Remark is confirm'd by daily Experience. How few of this Facetious and Comick Species of Men, caress'd and applauded for their shining Parts and witty Discourses, escape the Snares that encompass them, and preserve their Vertue and Sobriety of Manners ; It too often happens, that a Man elevated above the rest by his uncommon Genius, is as much distinguish'd by his extraordinary Immorality : And it would be well if it stop'd here ; but by Degrees he often grows much worse, by adding Impiety and Profaneness to Looseness of Manners : For being unable, that is, having a moral Impotence of Will to restrain his evil Propensions, and govern his vicious Appetites, and finding his guilty Enjoyment, attended with inward Uneasiness and unavoidable Remorse, and being conscious that his irregular Life is inconsistent with Safety and Happiness in a future State ; to remove the troublesome Misgivings of his Mind from the Apprehensions of Guilt here, and rid himself of the Fears of Suffering hereafter, he at length disclaims the Belief of a Supreme Being and a future Existence, and with much ado brings over his Judgement to the Side of his Passions : This ingenious Libertine, having too little Strength of Reason to subdue his Appetites, and too much Wit to think, that if that be not done, he shall escape at last Divine Punishment, abolishes his Creed for the Quiet of his Mind, and renounces his God to preserve his Vices.

THE Object about which Wit is exercis'd, are the common and less important Actions of Life. It is the Province of the Civil Magistrate to make Laws against enormous Crimes and great Immoralities, and by punishing Offenders, to deter Men from the like Transgressions; but they take no Notice of lower Errors, either because they have not such noxious Influence on the State, or because it is impossible to foresee and enumerate their numberless Classes, and prevent their Growth: Where then the Legislature ends, the Comick Genius begins, and presides over the low and ordinary Affairs and Manners of Life. It extends its Power and Jurisdiction over the wide Field of inferior Faults and ridiculous Follies, over the Districts of Indiscretion, Indecency, and Impertinence, and is Visitor of the Regions void of Discipline, Politeness, and Civility.

WIT is employ'd in its own Province, when the Possessor of it exercises his Genius on the ordinary Customs and Manners of Life, either in Conversation or Comick Writing. It has therefore no Place in the Works where severe Knowledge and Judgement are chiefly exercis'd; those superior Productions of the Understanding, must be express'd in a clear and strong Manner, without intervening Strains of Wit or facetious Fancies, which, were they admitted, would appear incongruous and impertinent, and diminish the Merit of the Writing. Hence Wit has no Place in History, Philology, Philosophy, or in the greater Lyrick or Epick Poems; the Two last of which, containing either the Praises of Deities or Demi-Gods, or treating of lofty and illustrious Subjects; such as the Foundation, Rise, and Revolution of Kingdoms,

doms, Commotions of State, Battles, Triumphs solemn Embassies, and various other important Actions of Princes and Heroes, are exalted above the Sphere of Wit and Humour. The Strength and Dignity of the sublime Stile is debas'd and adulterated by the foreign and improper Mixture of light Sentiments and pretty Fancies. These Sallies and Sports of the Imagination, will no more advance the Beauty of such superior Productions, than the Addition of glittering Tinsel and Glass Beads will improve the Imperial Purple, or adorn the Crowns of great Monarchs. And therefore we see, with what judicious Care *Virgil* has avoided this Error ; how clear are his celebrated Writings from the least sprinkling of Wit and pleasant Conceits, which corrupt the Purity, debase the Majesty, and sully the Lustre of the greater Species of Poetry ? And as the Gravity and Chastness of the sublime Stile, in the Works last mention'd, will not endure the gay Ornaments of Fancy ; so does that light Dress more misbecome the pious and wise Discourses, that come either from the Pulpit or the Press. Wit is so far from being a Grace or Improvement of Divine Eloquence, that on the contrary, it destroys its Dignity, breaks its Force, and renders it base and puerile.

THE End and Usefulness of this ingenious Qualification, is to delight and instruct. It animates and sweetens Conversation, by raising innocent Mirth and good Humour ; and by this Effect it relieves Domestick Cares, revives Men of Business and studious Professions, and softens the Asperity of morose Dispositions. It suspends uneasy and anxious Thoughts, dispels cloudy and sullen Melancholly, and by unbending and exhilarating the Minds of the Assembly, gives them new Life

and Spirit to resume the Labour of their respective Employments. The Exercise of Wit and a pleasant Genius, excels all other Recreations. What is the Satisfaction that arises from Country Sports, or the politer Diversions of Balls and Operas, compar'd with the delightful Conversation of Men of Parts and facetious Talents? Other Amusements, how agreeable soever, only please the Body and gratify the Senses, but this strikes the Imagination, touches the Passions, and recreates the Intellectual Faculties. And as the Taste of the Soul is more delicate and exquisite than that of the Body, so much superior are the Pleasures of one to those of the other: It is no wonder then, that the Assemblies of Friends are dull and heavy, that Feasts and Wine are flat Entertainments, unless some ingenious Persons are present to improve their Taste, and enliven the Company by agreeable Discourses.

ANOTHER part of the Province in which Wit is properly exercis'd, are ingenious Writings, intended to please and improve the People; and this is more various and extensive than Comick Poetry, tho' of the same Kind; for it takes in not only the Subjects of Prudence and Decency, regular Behaviour and vertuous Actions, but likewise the justness of Human Sentiments and Opinions in Points of Controversy,; of the last, the Dialogue of Dr. *Eachard* against Mr. *Hobbes* is a famous Example, where, by great Stength and Solidity of Reason, mixt with agreeable Wit and Raillery, he entertains and informs the Reader, and at once exposes and confutes the conceited Philosopher. An Instance of the first is, the celebrated History of *Don Quixote*, compil'd by the Spanish Wit *Michael de Cervantes*; a Book so well imagin'd, and writ with

so much Spirit and fine Raillery, that it effectually procur'd the End of the admirable Author ; for by turning into Mirth and Ridicule the reigning Folly of Romantick Chivalry, and freeing the Minds of the People from that fashionable Delusion, he broke the Force of as strong an Enchantment, and destroy'd as great a Monster as was ever pretended to be vanquish'd by their imaginary Heroes. And many more Books on other moral Subjects have been compos'd with much Wit and Vivacity in our own and foreign Countries, to expose Vice and Folly, and promote Decency and Sobriety of Manners. But the Productions of this Nature, which have of late appear'd in this Nation, whether we regard the just and generous Sentiments, the fertile Invention, the variety of Subjects, the surprizing Turns of Wit and facetious Imagination, the genteel Satire, the Purity and Propriety of the Words, and the Beauty and Dignity of the Diction, have surpass'd all the Productions of this kind, that have been publish'd in any Age or Country. The Reader no doubt is beforehand with me, and concludes, that I mean the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, which, for the greatest Part, have all the Perfection of Writing, and all the Advantages of Wit and Humour, that are requir'd to entertain and instruct the People : And it must chiefly be owing to the great Depravity of Manners in these loose and degenerate Times, that such worthy Performances have produc'd no better Effects.

BUT this excellent and amiable Qualification of the Mind is too apt to be abus'd and perverted to ill Purposes. Instead of being engag'd on the Side of Vertue, and us'd to promote just Notions and regularity of Life, it is frequently employ'd to expose the most Sacred Things, to turn Gravity and
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reserv'd Behaviour into Ridicule, to keep in Countenance Vice and Irreligion, and with a petulant and unrestrain'd Liberty, to deride the Principles and Practices of the wisest and best of Men. The Conversation of ingenious Libertines generally turns upon Reveal'd Religion and the venerable Teachers of it ; or on those of the Laity, who seem most sincere in the Belief of Christianity, and express the greatest Conformity in their Actions to the Precepts of it. Nothing gives so high a Seasoning to their Raillery, and more improves the Taste of their Jest, than some sharp and pointed Ingredients, that wound Religion and the Professors of it ; whereof some are made the Entertainment of the Company by these facetious Scoffers, and expos'd as Persons fetter'd with Prepossessions, and bias'd by Notions of Vertue, deriv'd from Education and the early Instructions of canting Parents. Others are represented as indebted for their Piety to the Pravalency of the Spleen, and an immoderate mixture of Melancholy in their Complexion, which, say they, give to the Mind a superstitious Turn, and fill the Head with religious Chimeras, frightful Phantomes of Guilt, and idle Fears of imaginary Punishments ; while others are ridicul'd as Men of a cold Phlegmatick Complexion, without Spirit and native Fire ; who derive, say they, their Vertue not from Choice or Restraint of Appetite, but from their deadness and indisposition to Pleasure ; not from the Power of their Reason, but the Weakness of their Passions. It would be endless to innumerate the various Ways which the atheistical Wit and merry Libertine employ, to take off all Veneration of Religion, and expose its Adherents to publick Derision. This is certainly the greatest Abuse of Wit imaginable. In all the Errors and monstrous Productions of Nature,
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can any appear more deform'd than a Man of Parts, who employs his admirable Qualities in bringing Piety into Contempt, putting Vertue to the Blush, and making Sobriety of Manners the common Subject of his Mirth ; while with Zeal and Industry, he propagates the malignant Contagion of Vice and Irreligion, poisons his Friends and Admirers, and promotes the destruction of his native Country ? And if these foolish Wits and ingenious Madmen could reflect, they would soon be convinc'd, that while they are engag'd against Religion they hurt themselves ; and that Wit and Humour thus misapply'd, will prove but a wretched Compensation for their want of Vertue.

IN this Place I crave leave to transcribe some Passages relating to this Subject, from the Writings of a good Judge of Wit, and as great a Master of it as perhaps any Nation ever bred, I mean Archbishop *Tillotson* ; “ I know not how it comes to pass, “ *says he*, that some Men have the Fortune to be “ esteem'd Wits, only for jesting out of the common Road, and for making bold to scoff at those “ Things, which the greatest Part of Mankind reverence ——. If Men did truly consult the “ Interest, either of their Safety or Reputation, “ they would never exercise their Wit in such “ dangerous Matters. Wit is a very commendable Quality, but then a Wise Man should “ have the keeping of it. It is a sharp Weapon, “ as apt for Mischief as for good Purposes, if it be “ not well manag'd : The proper use of it is to “ season Conversation, to represent what is Praiseworthy to the greatest Advantage, and to expose “ the Vices and Follies of Men, such Things as “ are in themselves truly ridiculous : But if it “ be apply'd to the Abuse of the gravest and most “ serious

“ serious Matters, it then loses its Commendation.
 “ If any Man thinks he abounds in this Quality,
 “ and hath Wit to spare, there is scope enough for
 “ it within the Bounds of Religion and Decency;
 “ and when it transgresseth these, it degenerates
 “ into Insolence and Impiety ——— And after-
 “ wards: A sharp Wit may find something in the
 “ wisest Man, whereby to expose him to the Con-
 “ tempt of injudicious People. The gravest Book
 “ that ever was written, may be made ridiculous,
 “ by applying the Sayings of it to a foolish Pur-
 “ pose; for a Jest may be obtruded upon any
 “ Thing; and therefore no Man ought to have
 “ the less Reverence for the Principles of Reli-
 “ gion, or for the Holy Scriptures, because Idle
 “ and Profane Wits can break Jest upon them.
 “ Nothing is so easy, as to take particular Phrases
 “ and Expressions out of the best Book in the
 “ World, and to abuse them by forcing an odd
 “ and ridiculous Sense upon them.” And in a-
 nother Place, having mention’d the most proper
 Objects of Wit, he thus expresses himself ———
 “ This I say on purpose to recommend to Men a
 “ nobler Exercise for their Wits, and if it be
 “ possible, to put them out of Conceit with that
 “ scoffing Humour, which is so easy and so ill-na-
 “ tur’d, and is not only an Enemy to Religion, but
 “ to every thing else that is wise and worthy; and
 “ I am very much mistaken, if the State as well
 “ as the Church, the Civil Government as well as
 “ Religion, do not in a short space find the intol-
 “ lerable Inconvenience of this Humour.

THO’ the Persons addicted to this impious Fol-
 ly, expose the sacred Mysteries of Christianity, and
 make its Votaries the common Topick of their
 Raillery, it cannot thence be concluded, that they
 are

are certain that those whom they thus deride, as whimsical, stupid and deluded Men, have not the least Reason to support their Religious Principles and Practice ; for if they were sure of this, they would treat such unhappy Persons as Men rob'd of their Senses, with Tendernefs and Compassion ; for none will allow such distemper'd Minds to be proper Subjects of Ridicule and Derision : But those who attentively observe the Manner and Air of these jesting Libertines, when they laugh at Vertue, will see plainly their licentious Mirth springs from other Principles ; either from this, That the Example of many Persons, who in Earnest embrace and profess the Articles of Religion, continually disturbs their Opinion of themselves, and creates severe Misgivings and Distrust in their Minds, least their Notions about Religion should not be true, when they observe, that many Persons of Eminent Parts, superior Reason and Erudition, maintain with Zeal quite contrary Sentiments ; or else it proceeds from their Hatred of Men of Vertue, founded in the Dissimilitude of Dispositions and Manners, and Disagreement in Interest, Employments and Designs ; or from an Envy of their great Merit, innocent Life, and worthy Actions, which from the prevailing Power of their own vicious Inclinations, they are unable to imitate ; for after all their Raillery and Expressions of Contempt, Vertue has that native Lustre and amiable Appearance, that will compel Men secretly to esteem it, even while they deride the Possessors of it. Such is the Pride and Vanity of degenerate Nature, that loose Men will always endeavour to level the eminent Characters of religious and sober Persons, and reduce them to the inferior Degree of their own : And for that End, they will labour to sink the Opinion and Esteem of

any Excellence or Merit, to which themselves can make no Pretence. While they cannot equal the bright Example of Vertue in others, they strive to fully or efface it, and by turning it into Ridicule, make it seem rather the Dishonour and Deformity, than the Beauty and Perfection of the Mind: And if they can disgrace Religion and subvert all moral Distinction, Men will be valu'd only for their intellectual Endowments, and then they imagine they have gain'd their Point, since the Superiority of Wit, as they suppose, is on their Side. These seem to me the genuine and natural Causes, why Men of great Parts and extraordinary Wit, but of loose Principles and immoral Lives, who above all others affect Popularity and gasp after Applause, take so much Pleasure, without the least Regard to Modesty and Decency, in a Christian Country to mock Religion, and jerk with spiteful Satire Men of Vertue and inoffensive Behaviour.

WIT is likewise misapply'd, when exercis'd to ridicule any unavoidable Defects and Deformities of Body or Mind; for since nothing is a moral Blemish, but as it is the Effect of our own Choice, nothing can be disgraceful but what is voluntary, and brought freely upon our selves; and since nothing is the proper Object of Raillery and Ridicule, but what is shameful, it must be a Violence to Reason and Humanity, to reproach and expose another for any Thing that was not in his Power to escape. And therefore to make a Man contemptible, and the Jest of the Company, by deriding him for his mishappen Body, ill figur'd Face, stammering Speech, or low Degree of Understanding, is a great Abuse of ingenions Faculties.

NOR is it a less criminal Use of this Talent. when it is exercis'd in lascivious and obscene Discourses. The Venom is not less, but more infectious and destructive, when convey'd by artful Insinuation, and a delicate Turn of Wit ; when impure Sentiments are express'd by Men of a heavy and gross Imagination, in direct and open Terms, the Company are put out of Countenance, and nauseate the Coarseness of the Conversation : But a Man of Wit, gilds the Poison, dresses his wanton Thoughts in a beautiful Habit, and by slanting and side Approaches, possesses the Imagination of the Hearers, before his Design is well discover'd ; by which Means he more effectually gains Admission to the Mind, and fills the Fancy with immodest Ideas.

NOTHING can be more ill-manner'd, or disagreeable to Persons of Vertue and Sobriety of Manners, than wanton and obscene Expressions ; on which Subject the excellent Archbishop Tillotson has the following Paragraph : “ Nothing that
 “ trespasses upon the Modesty of the Company,
 “ and the Decency of Conversation, can become
 “ the Mouth of a wise and vertuous Person. This
 “ Kind of Conversation would fain pass for Wit
 “ among some Sort of Persons, to whom it is acceptable ; but whatever favours of Rudeness
 “ and Immodesty, and Ill-Manners, is very far
 “ from deserving that Name ; and they that are
 “ sober and vertuous, cannot entertain any Discourse of this Kind, with Approbation and Acceptance. A well bred Person will never offend
 “ in this Way. And therefore it cannot but be
 “ esteem'd as an Affront to modest Company,
 “ and a rude presuming upon their Approbation,
 C 2 “ impu-

“ impudently taking it for granted, that all others are as lewd and dissolute as themselves. ”

MEN of finer Spirits do likewise abuse their Parts, as well as misapply their Time, when to gain Applause and increase their Popularity, they run without Distinction into Company, and by too great Condescension and false Humanity, mingle in inferior and unworthy Assemblies, where delighted with the silly Approbation of ignorant Laughers, they shine forth in a great Effusion of Wit and Humour; by which they make themselves cheap if not contemptible in the Opinion of wise and discerning Persons. Men of singular Wit, like Women of great Beauty, should never be unguarded; for if not endow'd with a decent Reservedness, a modest Air, and a discreet Behaviour, they sink in their Value, and by appearing in all Places, and becoming common and familiar, lose, in a great Measure, their Honour, and the Opinion of their Merit. It is a meretricious Prostitution of Wit, when the Possessors of it can deny no Addressees, and refuse no Invitations and Appointments, but suffer themselves to be shown at every Entertainment: Besides the gratifying of their Vanity, by a constant Pursuit of Approbation and Praise, which is the Spring whence this Prodigality of Parts and waste of facetious Humour chiefly arise; it is evident, they spend a great deal of Time, of which a wise Man can give no Account, while Wit, which should in its proper Place, renew and revive the Spirits for useful Employment, becomes a continu'd Diversion, and makes everlasting Idleness the Business of Life.

It is a Pity that a Man of fine Spirit and a fertile, as well as delicate Imagination, should think himself

himself engag'd in high Conversation, when he is only employ'd in the lowest Affairs that concern Mankind. His Post is of the same Kind, and but the next in Order above that of Players on Instruments, admirable Voices, excellent Actors on the Stage, and famous Dancers ; whose Province is only to amuse and recreate ; and is therefore far below theirs, who are either busied in governing the State, defending their Country, improving the Minds, or relieving the Bodies of other Men.

HENCE the Labours of the meanest Persons, that conduce to the Welfare and Benefit of the Publick, are more valuable, because more useful than the Employments of those, who apply themselves only, or principally, to divert and entertain the Fancy ; and therefore must be as much preferable to the Occupation or Profession of a Wit, as the Improvement and Happiness of Men is to be regarded above their Mirth and Recreation. I allow, that the Talents of these ingenious Men are very much to be esteem'd in their Proper Place ; that is, as they unbend the Mind, relieve the Satiety of Contemplation and Labour, and by the Delight which they give, refresh the Spirits, and fit them for the Returns of Study and Employment : But then it must be granted, that as I have said, this is the meanest, as being the least beneficial Province in which our Intellectual Faculties can be engaged ; and therefore these facetious Men can only claim the highest Rank among those, who are Inventors or Ministers of Pleasure, and provide Amusements and Recreations for the Busy and the Wise,

I would illustrate what I have asserted by the following Reflection. Domestick Fowls, the Hen, the Turkey, and Goose, are preferable, as more useful, to the singing Bird and the Parrot. The Ox, that ploughs the Field and brings home the Harvest, the Horse, the Mule, and even the stupid Ass, that carry their Owners, or their Goods and Merchandize, are more to be regarded than the Hound, the Lap-Dog, and various other Animals that seem to have been created only for our Pleasure and Amusement : And the Reason of this is very evident, Mankind may be very happy, and States and Kingdoms may remain in a flourishing Condition, tho' there were no such diverting Creatures in the World : And from the same Consideration, Men, tho' of a lower Station, who are not only beneficial, but necessary to the Well-being of Human Societies, are of far greater Importance, and therefore deserve more Esteem than those, who only are subservient to our Recreation ; for the World may still subsist, and continue in very comfortable Circumstances without one, but not without the other : And 'tis easy to name some learned and powerful Communities, the Envy and Terror of their Neighbours, who tho' they abound in Men of good Sense and diligent Application to Business, yet have few Wits and Jesters among them to make them merry.

THE Truth of what I have asserted will farther appear, if we reflect that generally Men of a plain Understanding and good Sense, but of great Industry and Capacity for Business, are in all Governments advanc'd to Posts of Trust and great Employments in the State, while meer Wits are regarded as Men of the lowest Merit, and accordingly

ingly are promoted to the meaner and less profitable Places, being look'd on, by reason of their In-application and volatile Temper, as unfit for a higher Station.

ANOTHER pernicious Abuse of Wit is that which appears in the Writings of some ingenious Men, who are so hardy as to expose from the Press the most venerable Subjects, and treat Vertue and Sobriety of Manners with Raillery and Ridicule. Several, in their Books, have many sarcastical and spiteful Strokes at Religion in general, while others make themselves pleasant with the Principles of the Christian. Of the last kind this Age has seen a most audacious Example in the Book intituled, *A Tale of a Tub*. Had this Writing been publish'd in a Pagan or Popish Nation, who are justly impatient of all Indignity offer'd to the Establish'd Religion of their Country, no doubt but the Author would have receiv'd the Punishment he deserv'd. But the Fate of this impious Buffoon is very different; for in a Protestant Kingdom, zealous of their Civil and Religious Immunities, he has not only escap'd Affronts and the Effects of publick Resentment, but has been caress'd and patroniz'd by Persons of great Figure and of all Denominations. Violent Party-Men who differ'd in all Things besides, agreed, in their Turn, to shew particular Respect and Friendship to this insolent Derider of the Worship of his Country, till at last the reputed Writer is not only gone off with Impunity, but triumphs in his Dignity and Preferment. I do not know, that any Enquiry or Search was ever made after this Writing, or that any Reward was ever offer'd for the Discovery of the Author, or that the infamous Book was ever condemn'd to be burnt in Publick: Whether this proceeds from the excessive

cessive Esteem and Love that Men in Power, during the late Reign, had for Wit, or their defect of Zeal and Concern for the Christian Religion, will be determin'd best by those, who are best acquainted with their Character.

BUT the most extensive Abuse of Parts and Ingenuity, appears in the loose Productions of our Writers to the Stage. It was the Complaint of the celebrated Wit of *Spain*, *Michael de Cervantes*, before cited, that the Comedies in his Time were not only extravagant and monstrous in their Contrivance, but likewise the Exemplars of Vice and Representations of Lewdness: But had the Plays in *Spain*, at that Time, been as Immoral and Unchaste as the daily Entertainments of the *British* Theatre, which have a manifest Tendency to vitiate the Taste of the People, fill their Imaginations with obscene Ideas, and their Lives with Levity, Idleness and Luxury; I say, if that great Man, whose Judgment was equal to his admirable Genius, had seen Religion and Vertue so derided, and Modesty, Reservedness, and Decency so insulted and expos'd, his Zeal for the Honour of his Country, and his Love of Mankind, would have animated him to have attack'd the Comick Poets with the same Spirit, with which he assaulted the prevailing Folly of his Age, the Romantick Atchievements of Knights Errant; his Wit and good Sense would have made those merry Authors as odious for poisoning the People with their loose and immoral Writings, as he made the other ridiculous for their extravagant and idle Tales.

No doubt a Comedy may be so contriv'd, that it may at once become delightful, and promote Prudence and Sobriety of Manners; that is when the
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Characters are well chosen, justly delineated, and every where distinguish'd; When the various Manners are exactly imitated and carry'd on with Propriety and Uniformity; when the Principal Action contains an instructive Moral, and all the Parts in a regular Connexion, Dependence and Proportion, illustrate and support each other, and have a manifest Influence on the main Event; When the Incidents are well imagin'd, and result from the Manners of the Dramatick Persons, when the Turns are surprizing, the Knots or Obstructions natural and unconstrain'd, and the unravelling of them, tho' unforeseen, yet free and easy; and when the Diction is pure, proper and elegant, as well as chaste and inoffensive to the modest and vertuous Hearers. So regular and beautiful a Piece as this cannot but greatly please and divert, as well as instruct the Audience. Nor is it, I imagine, from want of Knowledge of the Rules of Writing, nor of sufficient Genius, in which this Nation abounds, that so few Comedies, distinguish'd by these Perfections, have been produc'd: But this Defect arises partly from this. That the Comick Poets are often Men of loose Manners, and therefore unlikely Persons to undertake the Promotion and Encouragement of Vertue, of which they have no Taste, and to discountenance Imprudence and Immorality, when by doing so, they must expose their own Character to Derision; tho' sometimes it may happen, that a loose Poet as well as Preacher, merely from his just Manner of Thinking, and his Sense of Decency in forming Discourses becoming his Character, may entertain the Audience with laudable Performances.

ANOTHER, and the Chief Cause of the Immorality of the Theatre, is the ill Taste of the People,
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who, notwithstanding they have applauded several clean and regular Tragedies, such as those which have of late appear'd that are worthy of the greatest Commendation, especially *Cato* and the Plays for the most Part of Mr. *Row*, as great a Genius for Tragedy as any Nation in any Age has produc'd, yet still frequent and encourage the loosest Comedies. It happens, that the greatest Part of Men of Wit and Humour, who not being easy in their Fortunes, work for the Stage, and are Day-Labourers to the Muses, lie under a Necessity of bringing those Productions to Market, which are in Fashion, and therefore vendible; while others, tho' of ever so much greater Value, would be turn'd back upon their Hands; nor would the Actors, who live by their Employment, as the Comick Writers do by theirs, undertake to represent an Innocent, and much less a Comedy of yet higher Merit.

THO' several Assaults have been made upon the Comick Poets in Fashion, and many Batteries have been rais'd against the Theatre, yet hitherto they have prov'd unsuccessful; the Stage is become impregnable, where loose Poets, supported by Numbers, Power, and Interest, in Defiance of all Rules of Decency and Vertue, still provide new Snares and Temptations to seduce the People, and corrupt their Manners. Notwithstanding the earnest Cries of this great City, that importune these Writers to reform the Theatre, and no longer to infect her Youth, and draw their Inclinations from their Professions and Employments; notwithstanding the Sighs and Tears of many once flourishing, but now disconsolate Families, ruin'd by the dissolute Lives of their chief Branches, who lost their Vertues by frequenting the fatal Entertainments of the

the Theatre ; notwithstanding the wise and sober Part of the Kingdom, earnestly solicit them to spare the People, to stop the spreading Plague and stay the destroying Pen, they persevere with intrepid Resolution and inexorable Cruelty, to poison the Minds, and ruin the Morals of the Nation.

THE great Archbishop *Tillotson* has set our present Theatre in a true Light in his Discourse upon *Corrupt Communication* : “ I shall only speak a few Words concerning Plays, which as they are now order’d among us, are a mighty Reproach to the Age and Nation.

“ To speak against them in general, may be thought too severe, and that which the present Age cannot so well brook, and would not perhaps be so just and reasonable ; because it is very possible they might be so fram’d and govern’d by such Rules, as not only to be innocently diverting, but instructing and useful, to put some Vices and Follies out of Countenance, which cannot perhaps be so decently reprov’d, nor so effectually expos’d and corrected any other way. But as the Stage now is, they are intollerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civiliz’d, much less a Christian Nation. They do most notoriously minister both to Infidelity and Vice. By the Prophaneness of them, they are apt to instil bad Principles into the Minds of Men, and to lessen that Awe and Reverence which all Men ought to have for God and Religion ; and by their Lewdness they teach Vice, and are apt to infect the Minds of Men, and dispose them to lewd and dissolute Practices.

“ AND therefore I do not see how any Persons
 “ pretending to Sobriety an Vertue, and especially
 “ to the pure and holy Religion of our Blessed Savi-
 “ our, can, without great Guilt, and open Con-
 “ tradiction to his holy Profession, be present at
 “ such lewd and immodest Plays, much less fre-
 “ quent them, as too many do, who yet would
 “ take it very ill to be shut out of the Communion
 “ of Christians, as they would most certainly have
 “ been in the first and purest Ages of Christiani-
 “ ty, ”

AND not only wise and sober Men have de-
 clar'd their Detestation of the Immorality of the
 Stage, but eminent Poets themselves, who have
 written the most applauded Comedies, have own'd,
 that the Theatre stands in great Need of Restraints
 and Regulation, and wish'd that Plays were com-
 pil'd in such an inoffensive Manner, that not only
 discreet and vertuous Persons of the Laity, but a
 Bishop himself, without being shock'd, might be
 present while they were acted. Mr. *Dryden* has,
 up and down in his Prefatory Discourses and De-
 dications, freely acknowledg'd the Looseness of
 our Dramatick Entertainments, which sometimes
 he charges upon the Countenance given to it by
 the dissolute Court of King *Charles* the Second, and
 sometimes upon the vitiated Taste of the People.
 In his Dedication of *Juvenal*, made *English*, to the
 late famous Earl of *Dorset*, he thus bespeaks him;
 “ As a Counsellor bred up in the Knowledge of
 “ the Municipal and Statute Laws may honestly
 “ inform a just Prince how far his Prerogative ex-
 “ tends, so I may be allow'd to tell your Lord-
 “ ship, who by an indisputed Title are the King
 “ of Poets, what an Extent of Power you have,
 “ and

" and how lawfully you may exercise it over the
 " petulant Scriblers of the Age. As Lord Cham-
 " berlain, you are absolute by your Office, in all
 " that belongs to the Decency and good Manners
 " of the Stage ; you can banish thence Scurrility
 " and Profaneness, and restrain the licentious In-
 " solence of the Poets and their Actors, in all
 " Things that shock the publick Quiet or the Re-
 " putation of private Persons, under the Notion of
 " *Humour*. " Hence it evidently appears, That
 Mr. *Dryden* look'd on the Decency of the Stage to
 be violated in his Time, by licentious and insolent
 Poets ; and I wish I could say, that there is less
 Reason of Complaint in ours. In a Copy of Verses
 publish'd in one of the Volumns of the Miscellany
 Poems, the same celebrated Author inveighs a-
 gainst the Lewdness and Pollutions of the Stage
 in the strongest Expressions that can be conceiv'd ;
 and in his latter Days, when his Judgement was
 more Mature, he condemns all his loose and pro-
 fane Writings to the Flames, which, he says, they
 justly deserve : Which is not only a free and in-
 genious Confession of his Fault, but a considerable
 Mark of Repentance, and worthy to be imitated
 by his Successors, who have broken in upon the
 Rules of Vertue and Modesty in the like Man-
 ner.

THO' all Men of Vertue, who wish well to
 Mankind, and are zealous for the Happiness of
 their Country, cannot but observe the mischievous
 Effects of these licentious dramattick Compositions,
 yet they will find it very difficult to suggest an ef-
 fectual Remedy for the Cure of so obstinate an
 Evil. The ingenious *Spainard* mention'd before,
 for stopping the Progress of this contagious Lewd-
 ness in his Country, propos'd to the Government,
 that

that an Officer or Inspector might be establish'd, with Authority to peruse and correct the Poets Writings, and that no Comedies should be presented to the Publick without his Licence and Approbation.

BUT if this would have been sufficient to have prevented or remov'd this hurtful Practice, the *British* Nation would long since have had no Reason to complain on this Subject. We have Officers intrusted with this useful and important Power, and are able, if they please, to hinder the spreading of the Infection, by not permitting such noxious Productions to appear in Publick: But whether those Inspectors have had a true Taste and Judgement themselves, or have diligently apply'd themselves to the reading and amending the Comedies put into their Hands for their Approbation, or whether they comply with the Importunity of the Actors, who tell them, that such is the Disposition of the Audience, that no Plays of that Kind will appear beautiful, if they are strip'd of those Embellishments and Ornaments of Wit, which some morose and unfashionable People stile impure and obscene, and that to leave out those ingenious Strokes and Heightnings of Fancy, and put into the Mouths of the Actors only good Sense and modest and clean Expressions, is to clear and refine our Comedies from the most entertaining and delightful Parts: Perhaps they assure them, that the Audience will endure no Reformation of the Stage, and that it were altogether as adviseable to shut up the Doors of the Play-House, as to attempt a Regulation of the Pleasures and Diversions of it.

BUT

BUT tho' Men who love their Country, born down with a Torrent of profane Libertines, Persons without Taste and Distinction of Vertue and Vice, have almost despair'd of seeing the Comick Poets reform'd, and the exorbitant Liberties of the Stage restrain'd within the Limits of modest Language and decent Behaviour; yet now their Hopes revive, and they promise to themselves a sudden and effectual Reformation of these Abuses, since the Government has plac'd so worthy a Person at the Head of the Actors, and given him ample Authority to rectify their Errors: What a happy Revolution, what a regular and clean Stage may justly be now expected? How free from all sordid and impure Mixtures, how innocent, as well as diverting, will our Comedies appear, when they have been corrected and refin'd by such an accomplish'd Director of the Dramatick Poets? One that has a true and delicate Taste, and who is sensible of the Indecencies and hurtful Nature of our Plays; who has engag'd his celebrated Pen, in Defiance of sneering Wits and powerful Libertines, on the Side of Vertue, and has propagated the Esteem of Morals, Humanity, Decorum and Sobriety of Manners; who with great Spirit, Genius, and Courage, to his lasting Honour, has publickly expos'd the Absurdities, Vices, and Follies, that stain and disgrace the Theatre; in which Censure he has not spar'd his own Performances: One who has express'd a warm Zeal on this Subject, and declar'd his generous Intention, if it were in his Power, to cleanse those polluted Places, and not to suffer a Comedy to be presented but what had past a severe Examination, and where all Things which might shock a modest Ear, or be
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look'd on as repugnant to good Manners, might be expung'd.

BUT if these fair Expectations should be blasted in the Bloom, and notwithstanding the vigorous Efforts which will be made by this Reformer, Immorality shall maintain its Ground, and keep Possession of the Theatre, some other Expedients may be suggested to procure a Regulation. It might, perhaps be desirable, that a few Persons of Importance, Men of Learning, Gravity, and good Taste, might be commission'd by Authority, as a Check upon the Actors, to censure and suppress any Dramatick Entertainments that shall offend against Religion, Sobriety of Manners, or the publick Peace ; and all Persons should be encourag'd to send them such loose or profane Passages which they hear from the Stage, or read in the printed Plays : Nor will it be less expedient, that they should be instructed to peruse the Plays already publish'd, and which are now publickly acted, and to expunge all offensive and criminal Mixtures, that hereafter they may become a clean and innocent Diversion. Besides, this End would the more effectually be accomplish'd, if the Writers of Comedy, Farce, and Interludes, were rewarded and supported by Means independent on the Actors : For while the Poets, who write for a Maintenance, are paid by the Theatre, they will be under a great Temptation to write as desir'd and directed by the Actors, which was the Complaint of *Cervantes* above-cited, concerning the Comick Poets of *Spain*. The Actors, we may safely conclude, are not restrain'd by such rigorous Precepts of Vertue, but that they will always be inclin'd to present those Performances which will best fill the House and promote their Interest ; and
therefore

therefore they will readily humour the vitiated Taste of the Audience, by acting the most immoral Plays, while they find their Account in doing so: And that which confirms this Observation is, That they never, as far as I have heard, rejected any Comedy merely for its Looseness, tho' I believe they have refus'd many for want of that entertaining Quality. Now were the Comick Writers provided of a Subsistence some other way, they would be deliver'd from the Necessity of complying with their Actors, by writing such Plays as they shall bespeak, or at least approve, as the most likely to invite a profitable Audience.

It would prove an effectual Remedy for this Evil, if the Ladies would discountenance these loose Comedies, by expressing their dislike, and refusing to be present when they are acted: And this no doubt they would do, were they inform'd, that the Comedies which they encourage by their Appearance at the Theatre, are full of wanton Sentiments, obscene Allusions, and immodest Ideas, contain'd in Expressions of a double Meaning; for it cannot be imagin'd they would bear with Unconcernedness, much less with Pleasure, Discourses in Publick, which they detest as insufferable in private Conversation, if they knew them to be unchast. And should the Ladies assert their Esteem of Vertue, and declare openly on the Side of Modesty, the most attractive Beauty of the fair Sex, as certainly they would do, if they understood how much those amiable Qualities have been expos'd and affronted by our most eminent Comick Poets; this would lay the Ax to the Root, and at one Blow destroy this pernicious Practice; for after this, what Writer would transgress the Rules of Decency and Purity of Expression, when he knows,

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that

that by his immodest Mixtures, he shall fright the Ladies from the House?

It would be another effectual Means to redress the Grievance of the Stage, if the Clergy could be prevail'd upon to condemn from the Pulpit and the Press, as well as in their Conversation, the unjustifiable Entertainments of the Theatre; would they insist upon it, and urge it as a necessary Duty of the People to avoid these Occasions, and at least Appearances of Evil; would they shew them, that by frequenting these unwarrantable Diversions, they rush into Snares, court Temptation, and invite others to follow their criminal Example: Would they set before them the Hazard of playing on the nice and dubious Limits of Innocence, and adventuring to the utmost Extent of Vertue and the Frontier of Vice, there would be great Hopes of stemming this strong Tide of Iniquity. And this is no more than the Indispensable Obligation, which our Divines are under, whose proper Province it is to warn the People of their Danger, and to press them earnestly to fly from it. This venerable Order have, by solemn Engagements, set themselves apart, as Spiritual Guides, to point out the fatal Rocks and treacherous Sands to their Neighbours, that they may not make Shipwreck of Modesty and Innocence, and plunge into the Depths of Irreligion and Vice: Nor is it obvious, why these Reverend Teachers, by their Silence and Newtrality, should give Profaneness and Immorality such fair Play, as if the Controversy between the Stage and the Pulpit were compromis'd, and the Poets and the Priests were engag'd, as indeed they ought to be, in the same good Designs, Interests and Pursuits. It is certain, that this Mildness,

ness, and friendly Behaviour of the Clergy to the Comick Writers, cannot arise from any Respect or handsome Usage which that sacred Order has met with on the Theatre, where they have been so often jerk'd and expos'd in such a Manner, that their Divine Function has been wounded through their Sides.

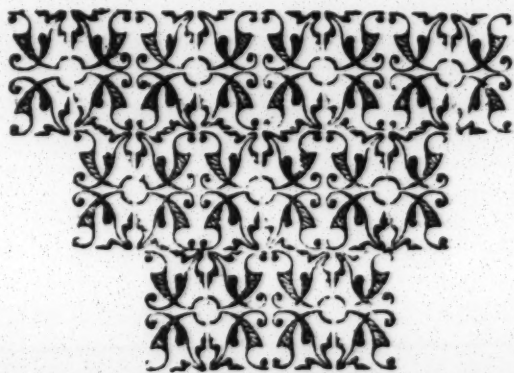
THE Clergy lie under such manifest Obligations to attack publick Immorality, wherever it is found, and by whatsoever Patrons of Power, Dignity and Interest, it is shelter'd and supported, that as I have suggested, it is not easy to imagine whence their Lenity and Tenderneſs for the Theatre can proceed. But if the true Reason of it, whatever it is, and which is so hard to be accounted for, were remov'd, and our Divines would interest themselves with Zeal in the Cause of Vertue, in Respect to our Dramatick Entertainments, as they espouse and defend it in all other Instances. I cannot believe that the Stage, without a Regulation, would be able to stand, when batter'd with Vigor from the Pulpit. The Poets and Players would soon find themselves obliged to restrain their licentious Conduct, reform the Theatre, and present to the Town, if not instructive, at least inoffensive and unshocking Diversions. And it is very desirable, that this Expedient were set on Foot, that the Honour of the *English* Theatre may be retriev'd; that while we justly boast of our Priority in Wit and Humour to our Neighbours, we may not be oblig'd to acknowledge the great Inferiority of our Comedies, in respect of Cleanness and Moral Beauty; that we may not be reproach'd, that while we profess a Reform'd and pure Religion, we encourage an immodest and unreform'd Theatre,

tre, and that we are very defective in the Practice of Vertue and Regularity of Manners, while these Abominations are indulg'd, and these unhallow'd Groves and High Places of Immorality are frequent-ed without Disturbance.

*F I N I S.*

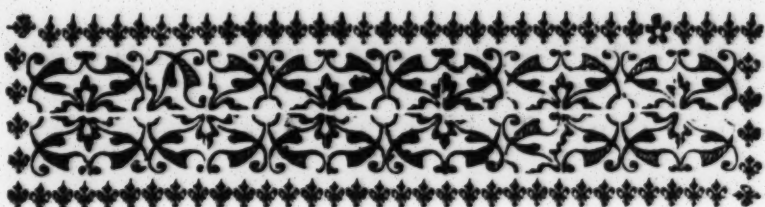
AN
ESSAY
UPON
FALSE VERTUE:

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in LONDON.



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A N
E S S A Y
U P O N
F A L S E V E R T U E.

THE Propensions inherent in the Faculties, and interwoven with the Constitution of deprav'd Man, carry the Will with so strong a Bias to sensual Pleasure, that the greatest Part of the World have always disrelish'd those religious Dictates of Reason, which laid them under Obligations to restrain their inordinate Appetites; but at the same time believing the Existence of a Deity, the Moderator and Judge of the World, at whose Tribunal they look'd on Man as an accountable Being, and finding in themselves that the Consequence of Guilt was unavoidable Remorse, as well as terrible Apprehensions of Divine Displeasure, they thought it necessary, for removing the Disquiet of their Minds, to atone the supream Being, and procure his Favour; and therefore instituted such Forms of Religion and Modes of Adoration, as they judg'd most effectual for this purpose. But not being willing to undergo the severe and difficult Task of subduing their irregular Passions, and denying their Senses, they

they design'd such Schemes of Religion, as might in their Opinion, at once be acceptable to Heaven, and easy to their criminal Inclinations. In order to this, instead of Purity of Mind and the Practice of Vertue, they contriv'd an external Worship of the Deity, consisting of various Rites and Ceremonies, which only affected their Bodies or diminish'd their Treasure: They erected stately Temples, consecrated Priests to officiate at their Altars, and appointed numerous Festivals, solemn Processions, and various Plays and Exercises, in Honour of their Gods, hoping they would be pleas'd and reconcil'd by this pompous and costly Devotion. Nor did they forbear the Severities and Pains of Fasting, Scourging, and performing Pilgrimages; by which they endeavour'd to revenge the Guilt of their Minds on their suffering Bodies. They likewise profusely presented their Gods with rich Offerings, and beautify'd their Temples and Images with expensive Ornaments: They were willing to commute for inward Piety, and essential Goodness at any Price, and could part with their Ease and Wealth, and sometimes with Life it self, rather than renounce the Principles of Religion; from the Practice of which they desir'd however to be excus'd; and were contented to sacrifice their Children, tho not their Vices, to their imaginary Deities.

THE greatest part of the Heathen World satisfy'd their Minds with such religious Institutions as I have mention'd, tho it must be allow'd that a small number of more reasonable Persons plainly discern'd the insufficiency of these outward Expressions of Respect and Veneration paid to the Gods, not accompany'd with a vertuous Life, to denominate a good Man, and make him acceptable to Heaven. And notwithstanding the Redeemer of Mankind, when he publish'd his System

stem of Religion to the World, acquainted his Followers in the fullest and clearest Terms, that the Soul and Spirit of Religion consisted in the pious Inclinations of their Minds, and the Innocence and Integrity of their Manners, and not in external Splendor, nor any corporeal Austerities; yet how soon did the Simplicity and spiritual Nature of his Institution degenerate into outward Ceremony and a mechanical Devotion of the Body? All Mankind express an equal deadness and indisposition to the extirpation of vicious Propensions, and the sincere Practice of Vertue, from whatever Sect of Religion they take their Denomination. And tho the Christian Institution, by affording clearer Light and greater Encouragements and Assistance to Obedience than the Pagans ever enjoy'd, is far more prevalent to conquer that Reluctance and Aversion that is found in the Minds of Men to true Piety; yet it must be confess'd, that the far greatest part of Christians have, in common with the Heathen World, a strong Inclination to compromise the Matter with Heaven; and instead of internal Purity and a regular Life, to put off the Deity with superstitious Rites, magnificent Decorations, and bodily Worship, while they flatter themselves that he will rest satisfy'd with this splendid Devotion, tho he expressly declares the contrary.

IN the mean time, a number of more judicious Persons not being able to reconcile the Precepts of Christianity to a meer Ceremonial Religion, abstracting from intrinsick Piety and the moral Goodness of their Actions, to ease their Remorse and unquiet Reflections, and secure their future Happiness, set up spurious and false Vertues in the place of the genuine and sincere; while others yet more enlighten'd bid higher for the Favour of Heaven, by embracing and cultivating some real

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Vertues; which, however, being in a weaker degree, and over-balanc'd by stronger evil Inclinations in their Hearts, and Immorality in their Lives, are insufficient to denominate them good Men, and to give them a Title to future Felicity.

As to the first of these, to convince them of their Error in this important Case, and subvert their ill-grounded and presumptuous Opinion of their being Men of vertue, the following Observation may have some Weight and Influence.

THE necessary intrinsic Principle which constitutes a moral Action, is an End design'd; and that which confines its general Nature, and distinguishes a good Action from an evil one is a right End, which excites the Will to chuse it, and to which it is directed in the Intention of the Agent. It is not possible that the Author and Lord of Nature should have any other Design in creating an intelligent Being, and endowing him with Faculties to know, obey, and adore his Maker, than to manifest his own Perfections in the Happiness of such a Creature: His own Honour in producing a Being of so high a Rank, by which he express'd his Power and Wisdom, as well as his Delight in communicating his immense Goodness, must be first intended by him. And unless Men may be allow'd to endeavour to disappoint the supream Cause, and oppose the Design of their coming into Being, then the End which the Creator propos'd to himself in creating, ought likewise to be the End which his Creature should chuse and pursue.

BESIDES, he evidently declares the End for which such a Being is design'd by the Faculties, which he imparted to him in his Formation. Whence it plainly will appear, that it is the Duty
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of Man to act according to the Capacities, Powers, and Endowments of his Nature, and through all his Schemes of Life, to aim at the only End of his Being; that is, the Glory of his Creator, and his own Perfection and Felicity. The choice of this principal End and the Reference and Sub-ordination to it in the Mind of the Agent, is the specifick Qualification of every Action morally Good; and where the Direction of the Mind is wanting to promote this ultimate End by a due Connexion of the Action with it, that Action is morally Evil. And tho it is most certain, that the Moderator of the World, by his wise and over-ruling Providence, will attain the great and glorious Ends of his Government, and make those who have no such Design, his Instruments to bring them about; yet if any Man does not in his Intention and Choice endeavour to advance those Ends, his Pretences to Vertue will be fruitless and impertinent.

Instances of FALSE VERTUE.

SUPPOSE a Patriot of eminent Abilities should, in bad Times, with great Sagacity, Courage, and Diligence, oppose and defeat the mischievous Designs of evil Ministers, and detect the Frauds and Corruptions of Under-Officers employ'd in the Government; if all his Clamour against the ill Management of Publick Affairs, and his great Industry and Zeal for the common Good terminate in private Aims: If his Vigilance and Labour to pull down Men in Power, springs from an ambitious View to raise himself in a new Scheme of Administration, to some great Place of Profit or Honour, let him be ever so much valu'd and applauded by the People, as one that has deserv'd well of his Country, yet his Actions taking their Rise from the irregular Motive of Self-Interest, he has

has no manner of Claim to the Character of a vertuous Man.

IF a Person of Power and Wealth, who designs the Improvement of Mens intellectual Faculties, by advancing Arts and Sciences, and embellishing the Language of his Country, should encourage Philosophy and polite Literature, should careſs the Authors of diſtinguiſh'd Merit, and reward their Labours with Gifts and Preferment, ſuch a Patron of Learning diſcovers eminent Marks of a great and generous Mind. But if this Reſpect paid to Men of Letters proceeds from a Proſpect and Expectation, that Perſons of Erudition ſhould every where mention his Name with Honour, and that all the fine Pens of the Age ſhould celebrate his Praiſes, and propagate the Eſteem of their bountiful *Mæcenæ*: If his aim be to engroſs the Dedications of the principal Writers, and have the Satisfaction of ſoothing his Vanity and Self-Admiration, by ſeeing his extraordinary Qualities ſet in a ſtrong Light by an artful Flatterer; this is ſo far from being a ſingular Vertue, that 'tis a great Blemiſh and Diſtemper of Mind: for what is this but for a Man to make himſelf the Idol of his own Eſteem and Adoration, and to engage mercenary Authors to bring in Votaries, that muſt burn their Incenſe at an Altar, which inſatiable Thirſt of Praise has ſet up.

IT is the ſame Caſe, ſhould any Man in his Converſation and Behaviour, expreſs all the Marks of Gentleneſs, Good-Nature, and Benevolence to his Friends and Acquaintance; ſhould he addreſs himſelf to every Man in the moſt courteous and obliging manner, and not only ſpeak handſomely of them in their Abſence, excuſe and cover their Defects, do juſtice to their Merit, and promote their Reputation, but likewise ſhould be ready, with a liberal Hand, to aſſiſt them in their Wants,
and

and by raising them to Places of Profit, to make them easy in their Fortunes; in short, should he take all Occasions to do good Offices to all Men: If such a polite and accomplish'd Person, by his amiable Expressions of Humanity and fine Nature, principally aims at procuring Applause to gratify his own Vanity and Self-Admiration: If he says kind Things to others, that they in their Turn may speak well of him, and strives to oblige every Man, that every Man may applaud his Character and spread the Opinion of his excellent Qualities; it is certain, that while his Intention in all this splendid Train of Actions is chiefly that a plentiful Harvest of Praise and Popularity may come home to himself, this fine Gentleman can never be a Man of Vertue, being mov'd by such an irregular Principle; no, tho he should with the utmost Modesty and outward signs of Dissatisfaction decline the Encomiums of his Admirers, whilst at the same time he thinks, that by so doing he shall acquire yet greater Honour, and make himself more considerable in the Opinion of the World, by adding the Character of Modesty to the rest of his eminent Endowments; for this is still by more subtle, but more effectual Ways, to accomplish his main Design: And therefore while he sets himself up in the place of the Deity, adores his own Perfections, and offers Praise and Admiration to himself, he is a deform'd Being in the most charming and beautiful Dreis, and resembles an impure Spirit cloath'd like an Angel of Light.

No Vertue in a Person of high Rank and Fortune, is more amiable or more applauded than Generosity, which is a ready disposition of shewing Kindness, and doing Good to Mankind. A compassionate Heart and an open Hand, above all other excellent Qualities, attract Esteem and
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create

create Affection and Popularity; tho we praise and admire Men for their Fortitude and Temperance, their Capacity and Application to Business; yet Love and Gratitude are produc'd only by Bounty and Munificence. It was well said by the Philosopher, That those most resemble the Gods, who need least for themselves, and do most Good to others. To relieve the Wants and Necessities of the Indigent, solace the Disconsolate, and to find out and advance modest Merit and neglected Vertue; to defend the Oppress'd, encourage the Industrious, and lay hold on all Occasions of promoting the Ease and Happiness of others, plainly demonstrates a great and excellent Disposition, as oft as these amiable Actions arise from a good Principle, and are directed to a right End. But if it happens that this liberal and generous Person aims chiefly at Popularity; if that is the charming Idea that soothes his Imagination, unlocks his Coffers, and dissipates his Treasure; if by the Profusion of his Wealth, he labours to gain the Hearts of the People to carry on his own privat Interest, and like *Julius Caesar*, lavishes out his whole Fortune, that by this means he may engage a sufficient number of Creatures and Adherents to raise him to Dignity and Dominion; it will plainly appear, that this Person is only liberal and generous to himself, and that by all his good Offices and endless Expence, he is purchasing Esteem and Power, and by his Munificence and Bounty, designs no more than to bribe the People, to gratify his Ambition.

SHOULD a General be eminent in all military Qualities, vigilant, wise, and active in disappointing the Projects of an Enemy, and in taking all Advantages to surprize and defeat him; tho he is perfectly capable of governing a War,
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and forming Schemes of Action with the greatest Judgment, is cool and sedate in Council, and as warm and brave in Battle; tho he thinks justly, determines with Deliberation, and executes his Designs with the utmost Celerity; tho by repeated Victories and a long Series of great and successful Campaigns, he should reduce the Power of aspiring Monarchs, and by procuring Safety to his Country, and Peace and Liberty to his injur'd Neighbours, he should acquire immortal Honour to himself: if this applauded Hero should, in his memorable Undertakings, be chiefly mov'd and animated by a passionate Desire of enjoying the Shouts and Acclamations of the People, and the Triumph of a publick Entry: Or suppose this celebrated Warrior should be excited by a Principle of Avarice, to engage in Enterprizes full of Difficulty and Danger; should he discharge the Duties of his high Station and Trust with admirable Conduct, and perform ever so great Wonders, chiefly with a Prospect of heaping up Riches, and procuring an immense Fortune to his Family: or it to gratify his Pride and aspiring Ambition, he has chiefly at Heart the Acquisition of Power and Dominion, by which he may be enabled to revenge himself upon his Enemies, dispossess his Rivals, and advance his Creatures to Posts of Profit and Honour, it is evident, that this Person's great Actions arising from an irregular Spring, and directed by personal Views, can by no means be accounted morally Good: They plainly proceed from a false Fortitude, nor has the Author any genuine Vertue but Military.

NOTWITHSTANDING a Counsellor at Law should be ever so much applauded for his great Abilities and indefatigable Application, and esteem'd for his Probity and faithful Performance of his Duty in the Business of his Profession, by
which

which eminent Qualities he becomes very useful to his Country; yet if the Spring of his Industry is an immoderate love of Money; if his Soul moves and gravitates to Riches, as it were by a natural and an irresistible Instinct, which exerts it self without waiting for the Approbation of Reason, while no Acquisitions can abate his Desire, but his Lust of Riches still rages and continues to burn with unextinguish'd uterine Fury: if he is illiberal, ungenerous, and sordid; if the touching of his Purse goes immediately to his Heart, and notwithstanding his great Wealth, he sensibly feels his parting with a Shilling; if the sight of a Dinner at his Table, more expensive than ordinary, puts him into a cold Sweat, and the News of a trivial Loss draws Tears from his Eyes; this Person has not the least Title to the Appellation of a good Man, whose Aims thus terminate in his worldly Interest.

LET an able Physician apply himself with the utmost Diligence to the Duty of his Profession, and express the greatest Tenderneſs, Care, and Skill, in restoring Health to the Sick, and Ease to Men in Pain; let him, with incredible Industry, weary himself by Day and deny himself Rest by Night; let him, with a sedate and unruffled Temper, bear the Pride and Peevishness of some, the Weakness, Impertinence, and Moroseness of others; let him, with invincible Patience, bear the Reproaches and injurious Reflections cast upon him by angry Families, where notwithstanding his utmost Art and Vigilance, he has misſ'd Success; let him be ever so charitable to the Indigent, bestowing upon them, without Reward, Advice, Physick, and Food, and treat all Mankind with Humanity, Condescension and respectful Behaviour; yet should it be suppos'd that this Person is acted by a wrong Spring,

Spring, and that his chief Aim is to gain general Esteem and the name of a great Man in his Profession, or to make his Credit subservient to his covetous Desires; while from his superior Reputation he hopes to be universally consulted; and by this means be able not only to support, but enrich his Family, purchase great Possessions, and leave behind him a plentiful Fortune: If this, I say, be suppos'd, the Doctor's applauded Vertue is nothing else but sordid Self-Interest and odious Avarice, conceal'd under the fair Appearance and hypocritical Disguise of those bright Qualities that conspire in his Character. A good Physician he may be, but it is impossible for him to be a good Man, while the Intention of a right End, which is absolutely necessary to give that Appellation, is plainly wanting.

NOR is the Case different with one of the sacred Profession; for should a Divine discover the Marks of the highest Zeal imaginable to instruct and reform the World, to fill the Minds of the People with great and just Ideas of Religious and Celestial Objects, and wise and worthy Sentiments, and raise in their Breasts devout and generous Passions, as well as vigorous Resolutions to correct their Errors; should he exhaust his Strength, sometimes by excessive Reading, and sometimes by intense Contemplation, in composing excellent Discourses for the Press and the Pulpit; should he employ the Vehemence of *St. Paul* to convince and terrify, and the Benevolence and Bowels of *St. John*, to entreat and persuade a stupid and degenerate People to take Care of their Interest in the future World, by reforming their criminal Life in this: If all the Hours that can be spar'd from his Study, his Pulpit and Domestick Affairs are employ'd in going about doing Good, in exhorting his People to Acts of Vertue
and

and Devotion, in reconciling the Differences of his Neighbours, visiting the Sick, and soliciting the Rich to relieve the Poor; till by his watchful Care and unwearied Labours, he has exhausted his Strength and emaciated his Body, and seems a venerable Spectacle of Mortification and Sanctity: If, I say, the main Design of this Reverend Person is to acquire Praise and Popularity, and the principal Impulse that moves him is a desire to be admir'd and applauded as a Man of refin'd Parts and strong Reason, of charming Eloquence and consummate Erudition: Or suppose, that in the Course of his Life his principal End is to gain Preferment, and to rise by Degrees to the highest Order of the Church; that he may acquire great Revenues to gratify his Avarice, and Dignity, and Power to sooth his Ambition, it will follow that his brightest Actions are no more than artful Impostures, and have nothing in them but counterfeit Vertue and personated Piety.

SHOULD a Magistrate use the greatest Industry, and exert all his Authority to propagate Religion and sober Manners, and suppress the prevailing Power of Immorality; and to this end should, with impartial Justice, punish the Guilty; and to encourage Obedience and Regularity of Life, shew to good Men repeated Marks of his Charity, Respect, and Favour. Besides, should he write Books on the Side of Vertue, expose Vice and Folly by the most pointed and elegant Satire, and in the most pathetick and polite Stile, urge the People to reform their loose Behaviour. Or should he disperse among his Neighbours, at his own Expence, the excellent Writings of other Men adapted to the same laudable Purpose; that is, the reclaiming the Vicious, and confirming the Good in the Ways of Vertue. If these shining Actions flow from an impure Fountain; if this singular

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Zeal and Concern about mending the World, is to atone for some secret Guilt; or if the Person so employ'd intends to procure the Character of a religious and sober Man, that under that Disguise he may carry on some secret Interest, and principally aims at Profit or Applause, his beautiful Deeds are no more than empty Clouds and gaudy Phantomes, that have indeed the Face and outward Appearance of valuable Performances, but wanting the Essential Part that constitutes moral Goodness, I mean, the Intention of a right End, which is to please the Divine Being, and obtain Future Happiness in his Favour, they have only the Name, without the Nature of Vertue; nor can they administer any solid Satisfaction here, or any just Expectations of Felicity hereafter, But if any Persons who endeavour to reform the Manners of other Men, are in the same or other Instances, as great Criminals themselves: If a Libertine, that plunges himself in Vice, wallows in Pollution, and gives the Reins to his inordinate Appetites, becomes a great Stickler in the Cause of Vertue and Religion: If one that defrauds his Neighbour, should expose Falshood, and display the Beauties of Integrity and Justice; if a profane Swearer, or loose intemperate Companion, should inveigh against morose Humour, Cruelty, and Hypocrisy; nothing would be more evident than that the Attempts of such unqualify'd Persons to correct and reform the Errors and Faults of the People, cannot arise from a regular Principle, nor can they be directed to a pious End; the Reason is, because Vertue is an even and uniform Habit, and where it is genuine and prevalent, it disposes the Mind to an equal Observance of all moral Obligations; and when it is unoperative and ineffectual in any one Instance, that is, when it leaves any one vicious Habit unsubdu'd, all the other fine Qualities must
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be pronounc'd spurious Vertues; for did they spring from a right Cause, and were they guided by a just Intention, the same Principle and End would direct and influence all the rest of their Actions, and make their Lives regular and of a piece.

IF this were adverted to, Men would not be so absurd and unreasonable as to attempt a compromising of the Difference between inconsistent Ideas, by mingling dissolute Manners and flagrant Vices, in the Character of a good Man; and then, if Men will adhere to their criminal Courses, they may at least be set right in a Matter of this Importance, and not be abus'd by unmerited Panegyrick, flatter'd with Titles of Men of Vertue, and cry'd up as Objects of Applause and Admiration. It is observ'd by learned Men, that nothing perplexes and confounds the Understanding more, or is a greater Hindrance to right Conceptions and Improvement in Science, than the indistinct and confus'd Application of Words to Things. Nor is it less true, that nothing more perverts the Mind, and obstructs the Growth of Religion and Morality, than the Appellation of a Person of Vertue attributed to those, who have not the least Claim to it. Tho it is a sad Truth, that there are infinite Numbers of loose and bad Men in the World, yet it is as certain that very few, if any, of this vast Body will acknowledge they are so, and take to themselves the Denomination they deserve; which must needs arise from the false Notions they have entertain'd of Vertue and Vice. But if Flatterers would suffer Men to go by their right Names, and were the People apprisd of the essential Difference between moral Good and Evil, it would be impossible that any should be so grossly impos'd upon. For if a Person may at once be allow'd

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to be remarkable for Heroick Vertue and Impiety, insatiable Avarice and Love to his Country, Fraud and Humanity, Honour and Injustice, or flagitious Manners and Zeal for Religion; if one that is plung'd in the Dregs of Vice may deserve the Name of a good Man, and the Libertine may expect in a Future State the Reward of a Saint; if these Ideas, I say, are not granted to be destructive of one another, then Light and Darkness are become Friends, the grossest Absurdities will be made easy to our Apprehension, nor should Contradictions any longer be look'd on as inconsistent.

THUS I have given many Instances of such Qualities as have the exterior Resemblance and splendid Appearance of Vertue; but not being animated by a right Principle and End, which are the Life and informing Spirit of moral Goodness, are only beautiful Illusions and empty Shadows; and are no more genuine Vertue, than a painted Tree is a real Vegetable, or a Statue is a Man. It is true, that in several of these Examples, the irregular but hidden Spring of Mens Actions not being discernable to others, in the Judgment of Charity they ought to be esteem'd vertuous Persons; but he that observes the inmost Recesses of the Heart, and inspects the Biases and secret Motions of the Soul, cannot be impos'd on, but will pass a contrary Sentence, and condemn the Insincerity of these pretended Vertues.

*Of the Desire of Glory that most re-
sembles TRUE VERTUE.*

BUT there is yet another Passion that approaches nearer to the essential Idea of Moral Goodness, and is therefore with greater Difficulty distinguish'd from it, I mean, the Love of Fame; which has here and there been touch'd upon in some of the foregoing Instances of FALSE VERTUE, and shall here be separately set in a fuller Light. The Desire of Glory, that is to be highly esteem'd by others and spoken of with Honour, has been look'd upon and recommended by the best Heathen Moralists, as the Instinct of a great and generous Mind, and a Mark of Sublime and Heroick Merit in Persons of every Denomination; and not a few Christians seem to agree in this Sentiment. But if Applause and a great Name are valu'd and pursu'd for their own sakes, and not as a Means subservient to some nobler End, whatever Encomiums have been given to this Passion, it cannot be admitted to the Rank of virtuous Qualities. To illustrate this, I shall crave leave to transcribe from a Writing, which I believe has fallen into few Hands, a short Discourse, tho perhaps too long for this place, that seems very pertinent to my Subject.

' FAME, which is the Opinion the World ex-
' presses of any Man's excellent Endowments, is
' the Idol to which the finest Spirits have, in all
' Ages, burnt their Incense; and the more gener-
' ous and elevated any Genius is, the more ve-
' hement is his Thirst, and the more eager are his
' Pursuits after this alluring Object. Whatever
' Power is invoc'd, this is the real one that in-
' spires

' spires the Poet, stocks his Imagination with
 ' beautiful Ideas, and kindles in his Breast the
 ' Divine Rapture. This glorious Prize at once
 ' dazzles and animates the Warrior; 'tis the Ap-
 ' plause, the Triumph, the Pleasure of being
 ' deafen'd with Acclamations, and distinguish'd
 ' and pointed at by the People, that makes him
 ' so patient of Toil, and pushes him amidst a thou-
 ' sand Dangers. As the powerful Instincts of
 ' Renown excite an ambitious Monarch to repeat
 ' his Conquests and enlarge his Empire, so they
 ' raise up Heroes to oppose his Arms and check
 ' his Encroachments. Thus from the same Spring
 ' and Principle of Action, Nations are sometimes
 ' enslav'd, and sometimes deliver'd.

' THIS warms the Patriot with Zeal, and
 ' makes him think he is only serving his Coun-
 ' try, while he is pleasing himself with Pursuits
 ' of Popularity. This smooths the Tongues of the
 ' Senator, and makes it flow with Eloquence;
 ' and it were to be wish'd that none of the ve-
 ' nerable Men, who dispence from the Pulpit
 ' Divine Instruction, had their Lips touch'd by a
 ' Coal from this foreign Altar. Man is naturally
 ' a proud Animal, and is fond of nothing more
 ' than the Breath of Fame to sooth his Vanity, and
 ' flatter his Self-Admiration.

' THO most of the celebrated Authors among
 ' the Ancients wrote by the Impulse of Vain-
 ' Glory, and Praise was the chief Reward they
 ' panted after; yet none so frankly own this
 ' Passion to be the Principle that inspir'd them,
 ' as *Horace* and *Cicero*. What Exultation and
 ' Rapture does the former express upon the Pro-
 ' spect of imaginary Immortality? How has *Tully*
 ' blemish'd his Character and obscur'd his excel-
 ' lent qualities by Self-Admiration, and an open-

acknowledgment, that he look'd on Praise and Honour as the chief Reward of Vertue and of Illustrious Actions? I blush for this great Man, as oft as I read the intemperate Expressions of his Thirst of Glory, which so frequently dishonour his admirable Writings.

'Tis surprizing and painful to think, that a Person of his extraordinary Faculties, Learning, and Wit, should be so extravagantly transported with this Passion. When he spoke his Invective against *Anthony*, who would have thought he was only flattering himself, and pronouncing a Panegyrick upon his own Eloquence and Zeal for his Country? That when he defended *Roscius*, he took upon him a Theatrical Person as much as his Client had ever done, and only acted the Friend in great Prefection; and that when he accus'd *Cataline*, he only applauded the vigilant Consul, magnify'd the Patriot, and entertain'd the Senate with his own Praise? And yet 'tis evident, that such was his insatiable Desire of Applause, that whether he assum'd the Character of a Patriot, or an Orator, whether he arraign'd the Criminal, or vindicated the Innocent, he had always the same thing in view, and intended chiefly, by various Means, to procure Glory to himself.

A WRITER in love with himself, is so puff'd up with Commendation and Popularity, that the Miser does not enjoy more Satisfaction in surveying his Heaps of Treasure, than the Author, who ecchoes to himself the Encomiums of the People, gives into the general Opinion of his own Merit, and approves the Taste and Judgment of his Admirers: Hence he draws, in his Imagination, his own Picture, which such amiable Features, and sets it off with such beautiful
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Colours, that he is ravish'd with the Reflection;
 and no Syhcopant can sooth an aspiring Prince
 with more artful Touches of Adulation, than
 those with which an Author feeds his own
 Vanity, no Man being so hearty and finish'd a
 Flatterer, as he that is making his Court to
 himself.

NOR is the Merit of a great Warrior in the
 Pursuit of Glory, unlike to that of a Self ad-
 miring Author: Fame, however thin and airy,
 is the Food of great Minds, that are not en-
 dow'd with a more sublime and generous Princi-
 ple, and to the Desire of this inferior Immor-
 tality, however empty and imaginary, are owing,
 for the most part, the Atchievements of Heroes
 and Patriots: These flatter themselves, that after
 Death they shall live by the Breath of Fame, and
 be carry'd up and down the World like the airy
 Phantoms and Apparitions of *Epicurus*. It is
 true, in this they confess the Belief of a Future
 State; for it cannot be imagin'd why they should
 desire to be spoken of with Honour, after their
 Decease, if they did not believe they should exist
 and enjoy the Encomiums bestow'd by Posterity
 on their Names; yet this will not deserve the
 Appellation of Vertue: For if the fine Writer
 or brave Warrior terminate all their Views upon
 themselves; if the Author only contemplates
 the bright Emanations of his Mind as reflected
 and coming back to himself in Glory and Praise,
 and the Soldier takes the Field and performs
 Wonders, chiefly for Laurels and Admiration,
 tho this approaches the nearest to true Merit of
 any thing that is short of it, yet their Actions
 springing from a wrong Principle, and being
 directed to an unwarrantable End, are but splen-
 did Illusions and Faults, disguis'd under the beauti-
 ful Appearance of Vertue.

It

‘ IT is the incommunicable Prerogative of the
 ‘ supream Being, to search the secret Thoughts
 ‘ and discern the Bent and Inclination of the
 ‘ Mind, and therefore no Man by immediate In-
 ‘ spection into the Recesses of the Soul, can charge
 ‘ upon another the Guilt of acting upon the Prin-
 ‘ ciple of Vain-Glory; but there is one distinguish-
 ‘ ing Mark that discovers this irregular Spring to
 ‘ one’s self, and to others, and that is, if the
 ‘ Hero or Patriot, the Philosopher or Poet, who
 ‘ pretend to the good of their City, their Coun-
 ‘ try, and of Mankind, should, in other Instances,
 ‘ express a Contempt of Moral Obligations, and
 ‘ become Practisers of Vice and Patrons of Im-
 ‘ piety; ’tis impossible such Men should be govern’d
 ‘ by a genuine Principle of Vertue, which never
 ‘ fails to produce an equal and uniform Series of
 ‘ good and generous Actions.

‘ THESE Reflections cannot but elevate our
 ‘ Conceptions, and engage the Mind in the Con-
 ‘ templation of the admirable Conduct of Provi-
 ‘ dence, which makes use of culpable Passions and
 ‘ irregular Principles, substituted by Men in the
 ‘ place of sincere Merit, to bring about Ends of
 ‘ the greatest Importance and Benefit to Man-
 ‘ kind. If no great or illustrious Actions, in
 ‘ which the common Good and the Happiness of
 ‘ Societies are concern’d, were to be perform’d by
 ‘ any but disinterested Men, who act from a Motive
 ‘ of real Vertue; how often would States and
 ‘ Kingdoms be involv’d in Confusion and Ruin,
 ‘ while no Warriors would be found to defend,
 ‘ nor Statesmen to direct and rule them. But
 ‘ when Principles of Vertue are wanting, as ap-
 ‘ parently they are in the Mass of Mankind, the
 ‘ Desire of Popularity and False Glory, by the
 ‘ wise Administration of the Moderator of the
 ‘ World, in a great Measure supplies their Ab-
 ‘ sence.”

A closer Enquiry into the Distinction of
TRUE and FALSE VERTUE.

IT is very desirable that Men should be fully inform'd in a Case of such Consequence as this; for while the greatest part of the People think they are already Men of Vertue, it is no wonder they believe they need no Reformation. But were this Confusion and Obscurity of their Ideas remov'd, and the Distinction of a Good and Bad Man set in a clear Light before them, they would soon discern their want of Piety and Goodness, as said before, and the next Step would be to seek after these Divine Endowments, on which their Peace and Satisfaction in this World, and their Happiness in the next do absolutely depend.

THIS being a Point of the greatest Importance, I will enter yet farther into the Discussion of it. Since no Men in this State of Mortality are so compleatly wicked as to be intirely unconscious of Remorse from Guilt, and free from all Esteem and Love of Vertue; and none arrive at that perfection in Piety of Mind and Purity of Manners, as to have no Blemish from the least Mixture of Evil: it is evident, that the Moral Difference, by which Mankind is essentially divided into the two Species Good and Bad, must result from the superior Degree of Vertue and Vice in the Minds of either sort. As good or evil Habits are predominant in the Heart and Life, they denominate and distinguish a vertuous or a wicked Man. But in this Case there is reason to believe, that great Numbers are guilty of a fatal Mistake, while they conclude themselves good Men, because upon the Comparison they find that their Vertues are
superior

superior to their Vices, and that more good than bad Actions appear in their Lives. Thus one Man notwithstanding his sordid Avarice, believes himself a Man of Vertue, because he is just, sober, and regular in the Government of his Passions and Appetites; Another is as well satisfy'd with his Goodness, who, tho he is loose in his Behaviour, intemperate, and profane, yet he is liberal, generous, a Man of Honour, and a great Lover of his Country.

SINCE every Man by his native Complexion, by Custom or Interest, is more powerfully sway'd by some vicious Habits and Inclinations, than by others, and is therefore less able to resist Temptations, that address themselves to those predominant Propensions, the just and impartial Trial of any Man's Integrity will be to examine and weigh whether the Degrees of his Vertue are evidently more prevalent than those of the opposite Vice to which he is most inclin'd. For Instance; if a Man is prone by Nature or Custom to Intemperance or other forbidden Pleasures, to discover his moral Goodness, he is not to set his Liberality, Charity, Humanity, Patience, and other laudable Qualities against his Intemperance, and conclude, that by his possession of so many Vertues while he is blemish'd but with one Fault, he is from the predominancy of good Habits to be denominated a good Man; nor should a covetous Person weigh his Humility, Veracity, and Sobriety of Manners against his Avarice, and then decide the Question in his own Favour, and pronounce himself innocent because he has many eminent Vertues and but one Vice; but the Person often overcome by Temptations to excess in Wine, or other unlawful Pleasures, must compare the Degree of his Temperance and Chastity with those of the contrary Vices, and if he has reason

to

to infer from his frequent criminal Compliances, that his vicious Propensions are the strongest, and that therefore he must be pronounc'd an impure or intemperate Person, this Man is from that single prevalent Habit to be judg'd a flagitious and wicked Person, notwithstanding his specious Pretences to Vertues of another kind, which are all demonstrated to be false and counterfeit by the predominant Power of any one Vice, as said before; so if a Man by a diligent and strict Examination should discover that his Love of Money is so inordinate and insatiable, that he must needs merit the Appellation of Avaricious, whatever other shining Qualities he may possess, they are no better than splendid Vices, and from the superiority of his covetous Habit he must be pronounc'd, what certainly he is, an ill Man: and this Rule is inviolably true in all other Instances of the like Nature. When a Man enters upon an Examination of his Integrity he should know, that if the Superiority of his Vertue is but in a low and weak Degree; if he often breaks his good Resolutions, complies with Temptations, and relapses into Guilt, he will not be able to determine his Condition, or conclude on which Side the Ballance descends; and notwithstanding his Goodness should be predominant, yet while it is unevident to him that it is so, he will reap no Satisfaction from his Reflections on it, but must be often obnoxious to frightful Apprehensions, and live in a doubtful, uncomfortable State.

It will be possible only to those more excellent Minds, that in an eminent Measure have learn'd to conquer all evil Propensions, govern their Passions, and subdue their inordinate Appetites; that persevere with Constancy in an uninterrupted Practice of Vertue and Devotion, to review their Lives with Pleasure and Satisfaction, and to discern the Superiority of their Vertue, and, in that their Title to future Happiness.

IF therefore any Man would know, and who would continue ignorant and unconcern'd in a Matter that so nearly concerns him, to what Division of Men he belongs, the Just or the Unjust, and consequently what he must expect in the next Life, eternal Misery or unutterable bliss; let him strictly observe the Course of his Life, and search his Heart to the bottom, and when he finds he has made a successful Opposition to that particular criminal Inclination which he is most apt to gratify; and tho' by Surprise and Violence of Temptation in unguarded Seasons, he is sometimes guilty of Compliances, yet that this rarely happens; while for the general Course and Tenor of his Actions he lives a vertuous and innocent Life, denies his most favour'd forbidden Pleasures, governs his Passions, and restrains his Appetites, he may come to a determination of his Condition, and rest satisfy'd that he is a Man of Vertue.

IT must here be observ'd, that Vertue which is so denominated from the Superiority of its Degree, that over-ballances the contrary Vice, in which its Essence does consist, is not such in a strict Philosophical Sense; but it is such as is requir'd by the Christian Institution to denominate a Man Upright and Righteous, and to qualify him for the Divine Favour and Acceptance; and this is frequently call'd Integrity and Sincerity of Heart, which over-powers the Opposition of every Vice, tho' it never entirely subdues it. It is therefore certain, that when a Man would know himself, he must not believe that he is a good Man, merely because he is conscious to himself, that he is sincere and in good earnest in his Resolutions and many vertuous Actions; for tho' those Resolutions and Actions are real, yet if they are oppos'd and overcome by contrary Inclinations, which have a greater Interest in his Heart and Power in his Life, they are but false Vertues, not having attain'd that Superiority of Degree that constitutes the Being of
Vertue

Vertue in a Christian Sense. Hence when many good Men question their Sincerity, and are afraid they are Hypocrites, they mean they are in doubt, whether they have attain'd a prevailing Habit of Piety, for all Degrees under that they esteem Insincerity and Hypocrisy ; because they are not sufficient to denominate a good Man, or give a Title to Future Happiness ; tho' in the mean time they are satisfy'd they have some inferior Degrees of Vertue, which they know are sincere, that is, real, tho' fruitless and ineffectual to the Purposes before-mention'd.

It is customary for Men, when they speak of others, to express themselves in this manner ; Such a Person is a strange Mixture, a Man of Pleasure, and too much addicted to Wine and good Company ; but he has abundance of excellent Qualities to over-balance his Faults, and I cannot but look upon him as a very good Man. But this is a destructive Delusion, and the Error will be soon detected, if we reflect, that the Superiority of Vertue and Vice, that constitutes the Good or Bad Man, does not arise from the Inequality in Number of their Good or Evil Qualities, for then there would be no Scarcity of good Men in the World. It has been demonstrated above, that one prevailing and predominant evil Habit is sufficient to denominate an ill Man, tho' we should suppose him to be in all other respects Just and Innocent. When we would therefore enter upon an impartial and severe Trial of our selves, that we may determine to which Class of Men we belong, the Calculation by which we are to be guided, must not be between our good and bad Habits and Actions of a different Kind ; nor must the Scales be cast by the greater Number of either sort, for then perhaps a common Liar, a Swearer, a Drunkard, or Betrayer of his Country, might claim the Appellation of a Man of Probity ; but the Decision must arise from a Comparison of a Man's strongest vicious

vicious Habits, and the contrary vertuous Inclinations, as before has been observ'd.

IF Persons would converse with themselves, and observe with Attention the Motions of their Hearts, and the Entertainments of their Imaginations, the greatest Part might soon discover what it so much concerns them to know, whether they are good or bad Men. It is clear, that according to the natural Method of the Soul's exerting her Powers, that Object which is most valu'd, and therefore has the greatest Interest in the Mind, must excite the strongest Desires, and engage the most ardent Love; whence it will necessarily follow, that the Object that attracts the Soul with a superior Force, must begin and guide her Motions to gain the Possession of it: What we chiefly esteem for its Goodness, we chiefly desire to enjoy, and what we chiefly desire to enjoy, from an invincible Impulse we endeavour to attain, by all the probable Means in our Power; and during this Attempt to acquire the principal Idol of our Hearts, we suspend the Pursuits after those Satisfactiones that have but an inferior Share of our Esteem and Affection, or at least we do not follow them with the same Diligence and Ardor; and this is the establish'd and unalterable Order of the Operations of the Mind, founded in the original Constitution of our Faculties.

UPON this Reflection it should not, methinks, be difficult to find out what Objects principally attract the Soul, kindle her Desires, and govern her active Powers. Whatever appears to the Mind most lovely and desirable, must unavoidably influence and engage the Will with the greatest Force; and what has the superior Possession of the Will, is therefore most earnestly pursu'd. Now these Transactions cannot pass so secretly in the Mind, but the Person must be conscious of them, and cannot but be sensible, what it is that he chiefly values, desires, and strives to enjoy. And therefore if any
Man

Man will reflect with Attention on the Operations of his Mind, he cannot avoid perceiving the principal Object of his Affections, since he must certainly feel the strongest Emotions and Inclinations of his own Heart.

To be more particular ; since no Objects can move the Will and excite Desire, but those that are represented by the Understanding under an amiable Idea, it is very evident, that as what we make our first and principal Choice, must be so represented in the intellectual Faculties, to attract our Wills, and command our Affections at the first, so, to preserve, and to perpetuate its Superiority in our Esteem and Love, that amiable Idea must constantly abide in our Minds ; and since in this Case, there must concur various Actions of the Soul, which must consider, ballance, compare, determine, and at last chuse the properest Means for the Attainment of it, it is very plain, that the Imagination and Faculty of Thinking, must of Necessity be more employ'd about this Object, than upon any others of inferior Consideration.

THIS being premis'd, whoever would discover whether Vertue or Vice has the chief Possession of his Soul, and to what Enjoyments, whether Criminal or Innocent, the Bent and strongest Propensions of his Heart carry him, he will be able to decide the Doubt, by observing what Things principally engage his Thoughts, and dwell in his Imagination, and what Ideas meet with the best Reception and afford most Delight, remain longest there, and return the soonest. Can it be suppos'd, that a Libertine will seldom think of Scenes of Pleasure, and forbidden Enjoyments ; that an ambitious and aspiring Person will dismiss the Thoughts of Power and Greatness, or the Avaricious fill their Minds with all other Images, excepting those of Wealth and great Possessions ? No more is it possible for a Man of Vertue, who chuses as his principal End the Fruition of the Divine Being,

Being, in a State of perfect Purity and immortal Bliss, to divert his Imagination from dwelling upon that ineffable Felicity, and the vertuous Means of procuring the Possession of it. It is inconsistent with Reason, and the Nature and Order of the Soul's Operations, that he should aim at, and pursue the Enjoyment of his Creator in Heaven as his greatest Happiness, while at the same time neither God nor Heaven are in all his Thoughts, or at the least are seldom and coldly consider'd. The habitual Disposition and Biass of the Will, like a native Instinct, carries a good Man to Celestial Objects, and engages him in the Contemplation of his future Perfection and Felicity. If his Thoughts are left to themselves by a spontaneous Principle, they move to Heaven, and adhere to superior Objects; and if his Mind is in a State of Compression, and engag'd by Force in the low Affairs of this Life, when that Violence is remov'd, it recovers by its own inward Spring its Divine Temper, and rises with Delight to the things Above: Neither the Ambitious, nor Covetous, nor Men of voluptuous Disposition, use any Arguments and Persuasions to prevail upon themselves to consider the amiable Nature of Power, Riches, and Pleasure, to entertain these Objects in their Minds, or to deliberate on the Means of acquiring the Enjoyment of them. In the same manner, when Piety has the greatest Power and Interest in the Will, it will as certainly engage the Mind in the Contemplation of Divine Things, and in constant Acts of Piety and Devotion: where a Man's Treasure is, there will his Heart be also; and if it be Above, thither will his Inclinations, his Desires and Thoughts follow it. He will dwell with Pleasure, like a Merchant in a foreign Realm, on the Thoughts of his native Country, anticipate the Raptures of happy Minds, and by the Fore-tastes of his expected Felicity, sweeten and augment his present Enjoyments, as well as solace and mitigate his present Sufferings.

Of VERTUE arising from Fear of
Punishment.

THE Minds of many Persons of a sober and regular Life have been much disquieted, when upon Examination of their Hearts and Actions it has appear'd to them, that they have often paid Obedience to the Divine Laws from Motives of Fear and Apprehension of Punishment; for it is their Opinion, that genuine Piety cannot result from such a mean and ungenerous Principle, and therefore hang in perplexing Doubt, whether their Vertue is sincere, and will abide the Test. They believe, that Piety ought to be esteem'd and embrac'd for its own heavenly Charms and beatifick Qualities; That a true Lover of Vertue pursues it for its intrinsick Beauty and amiable Nature, and does not court it under foreign and mercenary Considerations. But this Opinion is founded in a Mistake of the Nature of Man, and the Moral Government of the Supream-Being. Man is constituted with such intellectual Faculties, as make it necessary to move him to Obedience by the Objects of Hope and Fear, otherwise those Passions had been in vain implanted in his Soul; and as God has made the Mind of Man capable of being influenc'd by Menaces and Promises, so to procure Submission to his Laws he enforces them with the Sanctions of the highest Rewards and the greatest Sufferings. In the same manner that Parents rule their Children, Masters their Servants, and Princes their Subjects, does God govern the intelligent World. What more dreadful Punishments can be threaten'd to deter Men from Disobedience, than those denounc'd in the Sacred Writings. *By the Terrors of the Lord, says the great Apostle, we persuade Men.* But certainly those terrible Threats had been useles, were they not design'd to act on human Fears; and therefore that Obedience must be approv'd in Heaven, that springs at first from this Source.

I ACKNOWLEDGE it is a more sublime and refin'd Principle of Piety, by which a Creature endow'd with Reason loves, admires, and adores the Supream-Being for his essential Goodness, and absolute Perfections, and that thole are mov'd by a more generous and excellent Spring, who embrace Vertue from its own attractive Beauty and intrinsic Excellence, without an Eye to other Motives. But this pure and exalted Piety is perhaps only to be attain'd in a Future State of Happiness, where perfect Love casts out Fear: For tho' some elevated Minds may make near approaches to it in this Life, yet I cannot think that these are entirely excited by the native Charms of Vertue, and act without any Impulse of Hopes and Fears, and regard to Reward and Punishment. However, the most eminent Vertue of the best of Men in this State of Mortality, is only rais'd to a superior Degree, and differs not in Kind from that of others, who are chiefly govern'd by the instincts of Fear and Hope. Men at first engage in the Practice of Vertue, to avoid the terrible Consequences of a bad Life, and this is a just and laudable Principle; tho' after long Practice and continu'd Diligence, they acquire confirm'd Habits of Goodness, taste the Sweetness and Pleasure of Vertue, and begin to love it for its own moral Beauty and agreeable Nature; and then they act much more from regard to the Supream-Being, and a filial Obedience to his Authority, than from Fear of Punishment. In this more vigorous and adult State of Goodness, when evil Inclinations, tho' not extirpated, yet are so far subdu'd, that they now can make but a feeble Opposition, the Practice of Vertue becomes habitual, easy, and natural, and is carry'd on to greater Perfection; not so much from a Principle of Fear, as from its conformity and suitable Nature to the regular and well-dispos'd Faculties of a good Mind.

ALL Propensions and Habits of the same Degree,

gree, tho' of a contrary Nature, carry the Soul with equal Force to their proper Objects; and therefore, as Libertines want no Arguments to persuade them to gratify their vicious Inclinations with sensual Enjoyments, so neither would the Vertuous, if their Habits were equal, require any Motives or vehement Intreaties to do good Actions, and engage them in Works of Piety and Devotion. It would be idle and impertinent to use Reasons to prevail with hungry and thirsty Persons, to accept of Food and refreshing Liquors, with a weary Labourer to enjoy Repose, or a fetter'd Prisoner to receive Liberty. In the same manner were vertuous Dispositions thoroughly confirm'd and predominant in a high Degree, their Operations would be spontaneous and easy, and the Instincts of the Mind would exert themselves in good Actions, without any other Motive than the Pleasure and Satisfaction of doing well, with the same Readiness and Force as the evil Propensions of others incline them to forbidden Objects.

It is true, as I have said, this is the Felicity and Perfection but of a few excellent Minds, for the greatest part of good Men are in a much inferior State: Their Habits of Vertue are so weak and unconfirm'd, that they want Vigilance, Mortification, and Self-Denial, as well as the lively Apprehensions of the Divine Displeasure that attends criminal Actions, to prevail with them to continue in the Practice of Vertue: whence it appears, that Fastings and bodily Austerities, that some imagine are the Expressions of the highest Degrees of Piety, must be contented with the lowest Rank; for were the vertuous Inclinations of Men so powerful and confirm'd as to become natural, those Severities would be unnecessary: For 'tis an evident Argument, that their sensual Appetites and vicious Dispositions must be strong, when such Hardships and Mortifications are requir'd to restrain them. I would

not be understood as if I condemn'd these Expressions of Self-Denial; I only assert, that the Vertue which requires their Assistance, is generally that of Persons new enter'd upon a religious Life; for when Vertue is full grown and establish'd in the Mind, it becomes a new Nature, and draws it in proportion with as forceable a Bias to Good, as it did before to Evil: Nor would I be so understood, as if I did not look on the Vertue of those to be sincere, who use such Assistance, and frequently consider the terrible Consequences of Guilt to deter them from it; but this is what I assert, that the highest and strongest Habits of Piety do not demand these Motives and Helps, tho' the lowest do. Those of the most inferior Class of good Men, act partly from a regard to the Authority of the Supream-Being, and a Love to moral Goodness, and partly from Fear of Divine Displeasure and threaten'd Punishment, but the last Motive is the strongest and most prevalent in their Minds; but as they continue in the Practice of Vertue, and acquire more powerful Habits by degrees, they act more from their Love to Vertue and the Pleasure of Obedience, than from the other Principle; and when their good Habits are more predominant, and they arrive at the highest State of Perfection attainable here, they are still mov'd in a far less measure by terrible Apprehensions of Suffering for Disobedience. In short, to determine their State whether they are good or bad Persons, Men should not be so solicitous whether they are obedient to the Divine Laws, chiefly from a Principle of Fear, or chiefly from their Love of Vertue; but the important Question will be, whether their good Habits and Inclinations do, upon an impartial Examination, in the general Course of their Lives prevail, in every Instance, over their opposite Vices; for if they do, it is most certain that their Vertue, tho' it is not of the most eminent degree, yet it is sincere in its Kind, and will abide the Test. To

To sum up the last Article; deprav'd Man is a surprizing Mixture of inconsistent Ingredients, and contrary Principles of Operation, endow'd with Angelick intellectual Faculties, but debas'd and distracted by vicious Inclinations and irregular Appetites, which, during his degenerate State, exercise a predominant Power over his Mind, maintain with ease their Usurpation, and in a prevalent Degree govern his Heart and Actions. The Dictates of his natural Light are too faint and dim, and the Authority and Efforts of Reason too feeble to make any considerable Opposition. It is true, at Seasons the Understanding exerts it self, and protests against his unwarrantable and criminal Behaviour, while the Judge within, provok'd by Guilt, stings the Offender with Terror and Remorse; yet these Struggles are ineffectual, Reason is overborn, Conscience stifled, and the Tenor of the Man's Life is vicious and immoral. And tho' some Men in this State of Depravity may, in the Management of worldly Affairs, be justly applauded for their Wisdom, Vigilance, and Sagacity; yet in respect of Vertue and Vice and the Consequences of each, it is plain the Exercise of their Reason is suspended, and they may properly be call'd moral Lunatics.

IF in such unhappy Circumstances rous'd and awaken'd by some sharp affliction, dreadful Apprehensions of Death and Future Punishment, or convincing Discourses and importunate Persuasions, a Man begins to reflect, and upon serious deliberation, effectually and in good earnest resolves to reform his Life to escape the frightful Consequences of Guilt; since a vertuous Frame and Disposition of Mind, like other Habits, is acquir'd, at least improv'd and confirm'd by great Diligence and repeated Practice, his first Entrance upon a new Course must be attended with Labour, Trouble, and Self-Denial. And now Fears, Apprehension of Divine Displeasure and Future
Suf-

Sufferings, are necessary Motives to aid and support his unsettled Vertue, and break the Power of evil Propensions; but afterward, the Difficulties, by degrees, abate, and a regular Life becomes less painful and uneasy, till at length after Acquaintance and Familiarity, Piety grows so pleasant and delightful, that were it left to his choice, he would certainly embrace it as the Beauty, Health, Dignity, and Perfection of an intelligent Being. I shall conclude this Discourse with a Citation from Archbishop Tillotson, pertinent to this Occasion.

“ THERE are two Bridles or Restraints, which
 “ God hath put upon Human Nature, Shame and
 “ Fear. Shame is the weaker, and hath place
 “ only in those in whom there are some Re-
 “ mainders of Vertue. Fear is the stronger, and
 “ works upon all who love themselves, and desire
 “ their own Preservation. Therefore in this de-
 “ generate State of Mankind, Fear is that Passion
 “ which hath the greatest Power over us, and by
 “ which God and his Laws take the surest hold of
 “ us. Our Desire, and Love, and Hope, are not
 “ so apt to be wrought upon by the Representati-
 “ on of Vertue, and the Promises of Reward and
 “ Happiness, as our Fear is from the Apprehen-
 “ sions of Divine Displeasure; for tho’ we have
 “ lost, in a great measure, the Gust and Relish of
 “ true Happiness, yet we still retain a quick Sense
 “ of Pain and Misery. So that Fear relies on a
 “ natural Love of our selves, and is complicated
 “ with a necessary Desire of our own Preserva-
 “ tion. And therefore Religion usually makes
 “ its first Entrance into us by this Passion:
 “ Hence, perhaps it is, that *Solomon* more than
 “ once calls, the Fear of the Lord the Beginning
 “ of Wisdom.”

FINIS.



A N
E S S A Y
UPON THE
LAWS of NATURE.

B Y

Sir *RICHARD BLACKMORE*, Kt. M. D.
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A N
E S S A Y
UPON THE
L A W S of N A T U R E.

IT would have been an acceptable Performance to the World, if the Gentlemen of the present Age, who own a Causeless Supream Being, but do not acknowledge the Authority of Revelation, and the Divine Institution of the Christian Religion, yet at the same Time complement one another with the respectful Titles of Philosophers and Masters of unprejudic'd Reason, had publish'd a Scheme of Natural Religion, or a System of those Laws which all Men, who believe the Existence of a Diety, are bound to obey ; and had shewn whence those Moral Obligations arise, and by what Sanctions they are enforc'd ; which in the Preface to the

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Cæntion,

Creation, I have urg'd them to attempt; Had they done this, they would not only have wip'd off from their Character all Suspicion of Impiety, and have demonstrated that they did not, to avoid that infamous Imputation, shelter themselves under the Profession of Deism; but they would likewise have acted an honest Part in respect of those Persons, whom with great Art and Industry, they labour to pervert from Christianity to Paganism. For since from our native Degeneracy the Difficulty of paying Obedience to the Rules and Precepts of the Redeemer, and not the Articles and Mysteries of Belief, is the most frequent Cause why Men at length renounce his Religion; these Apostles of Infidelity, that with great Diligence strive to replant the World with the exploded Doctrines of the Heathen, ought to acquaint their Disciples with the whole Scheme of their Antichristian Maxims, and not promise to deliver them only from the hard and abstruse Points enjoind to be believ'd, while the harder and more disagreeable Vertues still remain to be practis'd, which is the most discouraging Difficulty in the Christian System. Thus while the Unbeliever, to engage the Christian on his Side, undertakes to ease him in Points of Faith, he conceals, out of Ignorance or Design, those Moral Duties, which the Deist is oblig'd to, as well as those who own a Reveal'd Religion.

THERE is great Reason to believe, That many are induc'd to renounce the Christian Religion by a false Notion, that if they are free from the Restraints of its Precepts, they shall enjoy a more extensive Liberty, be less control'd in the Course of their Actions, and being deliver'd from the Strictness and Severity of Manners which that
Divine

L A W S of N A T U R E. 5

Divine Institution enjoins, they may gratify their Passions, and indulge their Senses, without Guilt and Fear of Punishment. But these Persons should consider, that there is nothing new in the Christian Institution, but Matters of Faith. There are no new Vices forbidden, nor new Vertues commanded; the Prohibition of the one and the Injunctions of the other are again indeed enforc'd by Revelation, but without that, we are by the Moral Law under the same Obligations, and the same Confinements. And 'tis observable, when the Scriptures recommend Chastity, Temperance, Justice, and Mercy, they never give any Definition of those Vertues, but barely name them, supposing the World was acquainted with their Nature, and that the Observance of them, as well as the Forbearance of the contrary Vices, were the Dictates of the Light of Reason, and the Result of the Moral Nature of Things. It is in vain therefore to reject the Christian Religion, in Hopes of being deliver'd from the Restraints it lays upon us; for we shall still lie under the same Limitations from the Laws of Nature, whose Obligations will stick inseparably to us, and make us altogether as much accountable. And to make this evident, I have undertaken to demonstrate the Obligations we are under by those unwritten Laws.

IN prosecuting this Design, I shall first make it clear, That in Fact there are such Moral Obligations, which are term'd Laws of Nature. And, Secondly, That these Laws necessarily arise from the various Relations between God and Man, and derive their binding Force from Divine Authority. In order to this, I shall shew what those Relations are, and in what they are founded; and then shall demonstrate how the Laws of Nature or
Moral

6 *An* E S S A Y *upon the*

Moral Duties must unavoidably result from those Relations.

BEFORE we enter upon this Province, it is necessary to observe, that the Assertors and Patrons of Impiety use this Expression, *The Law of Nature*, in an equivocal Sense, and mean by it nothing but the Order and Course of Things, or the Series and Connexion of Causes and Effects in the visible World ; as for Instance, the Diurnal and Annual Revolution of the Sun, the Circular Motion and various Appearances of the Moon, the Propension of heavy Bodies to descend, and of light ones to rise, the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, and the like Phænomena, are said to be the Laws of Nature, as indeed they are in a Physical, tho' not in a Moral Sense ; that is, the Author of all Things has made that Disposition and Connexion of active Principles and passive Natures, that such a Course and Order of Events shall of Necessity be preserv'd. But then these false Philosophers and Pretenders to Reason declare their impious Opinion, that Man is mov'd in the same Manner as Brutes and Inanimate Beings, by a necessary Impulse, and will not allow the Diety to rule his Rational Creature according to his Nature, and in as high and honourable a Way as the Civil Magistrates governs his Subjects, that is, by a Rule prescrib'd to their Actions. 'Tis plain, That by the Laws of Nature as they regard Mankind, these Men do not mean the Precepts or Commands of God, signify'd and directed to a Moral Agent, one capable of determining himself to Compliance or Disobedience, which is the only Sense in which I take the Expression.

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I shall now undertake to evince, That there really are Moral Obligations, which we term Laws of Nature.

THAT the Power we have over our Actions is bounded by natural Limitations, which make it our Duty to do some Things and to forbear others, antecedent to the Authority of Humane Laws, is a Truth confirm'd by the general Consent of Mankind. Men feel in their Breasts a secret Sense of Religion and Vertue ; and when they act in Conformity to the Rules of Piety and Justice, they are rewarded with an inward Pleasure and Satisfaction : And on the contrary, when they violate those Precepts by enormous Transgressions, they are startled by Reflection on their Guilt, and fill'd with Remorse and Terror. And this the Pagan World, who had not the Advantage of Revelation, did always acknowledge. *Juvenal*, in the Beginning of his thirteenth Satire, affirms, " That every Man is displeas'd with himself for being the Author of an evil Action, and that guilty Persons are condemn'd by their own judicial Sentence. " *Cicero*, in his Book of Laws, says, *Furies pursue and torment the Wicked, not with fabulous Firebrands, but with the Anguish of Conscience, and Tortures of inward Guilt.* And in another Book he affirms, *That a Mind conscious of Wickedness, is tormented with the Expectation of all Kinds of Punishment.*

It is the universal Opinion of Mankind, That Humanity, good Nature, Benevolence, Gratitude, Modesty, Friendship, and Heroick Zeal for the Good of our Country, are eminent Vertues, and the Ornaments of Perfection of our Nature, And are not Insolence, Pride, Impudence, Ingratitude

titude, Cruelty, Avarice, and a narrow Self-interested Spirit, as much condemn'd and detested? On this Subject, *Cicero* thus argues, " If Justice is
 " not establish'd by the Law of Nature, all Ver-
 " tue is gone; where would Liberality, where
 " would Charity, where would Piety, where would
 " Beneficence and Gratitude exist? If only the
 " Fear of Punishment from the Magistrate, and
 " not its evil Nature and Turpitude deters us from
 " a flagitious and wicked Life, no Man could be
 " vicious or unjust: Nor could a Man so proper-
 " ly be call'd wicked, as unwary. — If, *says*
 " *he*, the Laws of the People, the Decrees of
 " Princes, the Determination of Judges, consti-
 " tute the Goodness of our Actions; then would
 " it be lawful to rob, to commit Adultery, to
 " forge Deeds and Testaments, if these should be
 " authoriz'd and approv'd by the Voices of the
 " ruling Multitude? But can the Power of igno-
 " rant Men change and invert the Nature of Things?
 " If so, they might by a Law, make Good Evil,
 " and Evil Good. If in *Rome* there had been no
 " written Law against a Rape, in the Reign of
 " *Tarquin*, would not therefore *Tarquin* have of-
 " fended against the Eternal Law, when he offer'd
 " Violence to *Lucretia*? There was in this Case a
 " Dictate of Nature, which did not then begin to
 " be a Law when it was first written, but was
 " Coæval with the Divine Mind; " and there-
 " fore he calls it the Law of the Supreme God:
 And says farther, That the Laws of the Civil
 Magistrate are then good, when they bear a Con-
 formity to the Law of Nature; otherwise they are
 no Laws.

PLATO prepares the People to be good Subjects,
 by inculcating on them the Obligations they are
 under

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under by the Laws of Nature, to yeild Obedience to the Civil Magistrate. And *Cicero* in Imitation of

him, expresse himself in this Divine Manner:

“ Let Citizens be first persuaded that there are

“ Gods, who are Lords and Governors of all

“ Things; that all Things are administer’d and

“ directed by their Wisdom and Providence; that

“ they observe what every Man is, what he does,

“ and what he entertains in his Breast; with what

“ Temper of Mind, and what Devotion he pays

“ Divine Worship; and that they make a Dis-

“ tinction of the Pious and Impious: And then

“ says, Who will deny these Opinions to be use-

“ ful, when he reflects how many Things are

“ confirm’d by a solemn Oath, how much religi-

“ gious Leagues contribute to our Safety and Ad-

“ vantage; how many are reduc’d from Wicked-

“ ness by the Fear of Divine Punishment, and how

“ sacred the Society of Citizens must be, while

“ they look on the Immortal Gods both as Judges

“ and Witnesses of their Deeds? ” This Acknow-

“ ledgement of a moral Distinction between Good

“ and Evil, and the Fear of Divine Displeasure and

“ Punishment from enormous Guilt, is so universal,

“ that many affirm Divine Laws are born with us;

“ are written in our Hearts, and as *Cicero* speaks, im-

“ planted in our Nature.

THE Legislative Authority of Civil Magistrates cannot extend to the Secrets of the Heart, which fall not under their Knowledge and Observation; and therefore they do not pretend to prescribe Laws to regulate our internal Actions. If then we are under no Limitations from any Divine Precepts, we have an absolute and uncontrol’d Dominion over our Thoughts and Passions, and are accountable to no Tribunal for any secret Transacti-

ons of the Mind. And hence it will follow, that no Obliquity, no Guilt, no Dishonour can attend any Emotions of the Heart, tho' it is indeed the Source and Spring of all Morality. Excessive Anger, Malice, Hatred, Envy, Ill-will to our Neighbour, secret Joy at the Ruin of our Benefactors, or the Misfortune of our Country, or the Destruction and Calamity of Mankind, would be innocent and lawful: Ambition, Pride, Haughtiness, Self-Admiration, Contempt and Scorn of others, Avarice, Dissimulation, would not deserve the least Blame or Reproach. But was any Nation ever known so stupid and barbarous, as to believe there is no Turpitude, nothing to be censur'd or detested in such Passions? Have not the Heathen World express'd their Abhorrence of them; and the more civiliz'd and enlighten'd they were, did they not the more condemn and inveigh against them? Have not the wisest of them left excellent Writings, wherein they persuade and excite Men to the Government of the Passions, and lay down Rules and Directions by which they may attain this Perfection? Were not *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, and *Plutarch*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Antonine*, and *Epictetus*, besides many others, famous for their Instructions on this Head of Morality? And if the secret Operations of our Minds and the Regulation of our Thoughts, the Restraint of our Appetites, and the Conduct of our Passions, are Moral Duties, they must be denominated such from the Obligations of Divine Commands, that is, from the Laws of Nature,

ALL Laws must be the Laws of some Person invested with Legislative Authority; and therefore if there be any antecedent to, or besides those of the Civil Magistrate, they must be the Precepts of
the

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the Supream Being. I must acknowledge, that the Moral Goodness and Beauty, the Wickedness and Deformity of Actions, which some great Divines derive from the intrinsick Nature of Things, without any Consideration of a Law that commands or prohibits them, is what I am not able to conceive. The Distinction of Good and Evil seems to me to result from the disagreement or Conformity of our Actions to the Precepts that enjoin them. If there be no Law, where is Disobedience? If no Rule, where is Error or Deviation? If no Limits prescrib'd, where is Transgression? I believe, upon Examination, it will appear, That all the celebrated intrinsick Good and Evil of Things which is said to be unalterable and eternal, without any Regard to their being commanded or forbidden, must be taken in a physical Sense; and so Things are term'd Good or Evil, as they are advantageous or hurtful, useful or prejudicial to Mankind. But this Convenience or Inconvenience, Comodity or Discomodity of Things, is not their Moral Rectitude or Obliquity, which of Necessity includes the Notion of a Law observ'd or transgress'd.

Thus having shown that there are Divine unwritten Laws, to which all men ought to yield Obedience, I shall now demonstrate the Authority and obligatory Force, and show in particular what they are.

THE Existence of a God and the Administration of his Providence, I have already asserted and prov'd in another Writing, which likewise has been done by many excellent Philosophers and Divines. I shall therefore take this Proposition,
An Eternal, Uncreated Mind, of Infinite Power, Wis-

dom, and Goodness, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, does exist, as sufficiently evinc'd and granted; which shall now be the Principle whence I undertake to deduce my following Conclusions.

WHOEVER acknowledges the Being of this Independent and Self-existent Cause of Things, will easily discern the various Relations between God and Man, which flow necessary and immediate from this Principle.

IF the Origin of Human Nature is deriv'd from God as the first Efficient, it follows that Man is related to him as his Creature, and he to Man as his Creator. And since 'tis a plain Contradiction, that there may be a self-sufficient, independent Creature; for then it must be granted, that the Supreme Being has made a Creature equal in Perfection to himself, that is, another God, the Consequence will be, that a Man who has a precarious and supported Existence is related to his Maker, as the continu'd Cause of his Being, and his Conservator. The Ideas of Creator and Preserver, of necessity include those of good Will and Beneficence: Whence the Inference will be clear, that Man is related to his Divine Author, from whom he has receiv'd all the Enjoyments and Perfections of his Being, and to whom he owes their Continuance, as his chief Benefactor. It will also be an undeniable Deduction from what has been laid down, that God is related to Man as his sole Proprietor; no Maxim being more easily and more universally allow'd than this, That what any one has entirely made is entirely his own, and no Right in any Workmanship can possibly be so full and extensive as that of a Creator.

AND

AND whoever reflects on the Nature of Man, as endow'd with Reason, and a Faculty to will and chuse, whereby he becomes a Moral Agent, will pronounce him capable of being govern'd by Laws; and if he contemplates the Attributes of the Divine Being, his Almighty Power, Omniscience, Goodness and Omnipresence, will, without hesitation, conclude, that God is perfectly qualify'd to be his Governor; and that he only is capable of governing the whole Race of Mankind: And if he considers his Absolute Propriety in Man as his Creature, he will clearly discern the Right he has to exercise Dominion over him, The Creator then by giving Man Faculties to know and discern his Will, and making him apt to be mov'd to Obedience by Hopes of Reward, and deter'd from Transgression by Fears of Punishment, has made him a governable Creature; and since it cannot be suppos'd he gave him those Faculties in vain, nothing can be more agreeable to Reason than to conclude, that God intended and design'd, that Man should be govern'd according to his Nature; that is, as an intelligent and rational Being; and since every one has a Power to rule his own, as far as his Propriety extends, and the Supream Being has an unlimited Propriety in his Creature Man, and is likewise capable, only capable, of ruling the whole Species, it will most evidently follow, that God is related to Man as his Governor, and Man to him as his Subject.

AND if Man is subject to his Maker, as his Sovereign Lord and Ruler, 'tis clear that he must be an accomptable Creature, and that his Creator is the Judge to whom he must accompt; who will
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one Day bring him before his just Tribunal, and condemn or acquit, reward or punish him according to the Measures of his Obedience or Transgression.

THERE have been many warm, but unnecessary Disputes manag'd by learned Men, about the Title of God to his Government of Mankind ; but laying aside Terms of Art, and avoiding Ostentation of Learning and a disputing Temper ; from what has been said, I imagine, the Divine Title, or the Foundation of God's Right to Rule by his Laws the Rational World, will easily and clearly appear. His Relation to Mankind as universal King, that is, his Sovereignty or Supream Power, results from his absolute Propriety in his Creature. Man is his own, because he made him ; and since he is made a governable Being, his Maker, as his absolute unlimited Lord and Owner, must have the sole Right or Authority to govern him. So that this Point, that has made so great a Stir, and exercis'd so many Pens, does not seem so abstruse and difficult. I think it is very plain, that the Divine Right of Supream Government, is founded in, and results from God's plenary Propriety, in a Creature apt and qualify'd for Subjection and Obedience ; and this Government he has ever exercis'd, and continues to do so, by making and declaring Laws to regulate the Actions of Men.

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Of the L A W S of N A T U R E, how promulgated.

SINCE it is clear, that God is the Governor of Man, 'tis as clear he must govern him by Laws, that is, by Rules that settle his Duty. Let us therefore enquire what those Laws are, and how made known to Mankind.

IN Order to this it must be consider'd, That a Law in general is nothing else but the Will of the Legislator declar'd to his Subject, as the Rule of his Actions. This is a full Definition, and tho' the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments are usually annex'd, which by acting on our Hopes and Fears enforce the Observance of the Law-giver's Command, yet is it no essential Part of the Law; for the Will and Pleasure of the Sovereign Ruler, when made known, constitutes the Duty of the Subject, and binds him to obey.

THE Threats and Promises superadded are only Incitements to the Subject to pay that Obedience, which before by vertue of the Law-giver's Authority he was oblig'd to do.

COULD it be suppos'd that God had made no Laws for Man discernable by the Light of Nature, that is, deducible by Reason abstracting from Revelation; Man being intirely free from Restraints would have an unlimited Power over his Actions, and there could be no such Thing as Religion in the World; no Obligation on Princes to protect, or on Subjects to obey: No Duty from Parents to Children, or from Children to Parents: No Friend-ship,

ship, no Justice, no Faithfulness, in short, no Moral Distinction of Good and Evil. Men would be unable to Sin, and utterly incapable of Guilt, or of recommending himself to the Favour or Good-Will of his Maker by Obedience; and these are the Maxims which irreligious Philosophers would fain establish. But it will appear, That God has not in this Case left himself without Witness, nor Mankind without proper Means to discover the Divine Will concerning their Duty. A conscious tho' imperfect Light still remains in degenerate Nature, by which Men discern a Difference between Virtue and Vice, the Regularity and Obliquity of their Actions, and by unavoidable Reflection, condemn or applaud themselves for what they have done. By the Guidance of this Light, without the Assistance of Divine Revelation, many excellent Persons in the Pagan World, carefully attending to its Dictates, made such Improvements in Moral Knowledge, and such Discoveries of their Duty, that many since, who have enjoy'd the vast Advantages of Revelation, to their great Dishonour, have fallen short of the like Attainments.

THO' this be the Case, if the wisest and most vertuous of the Ancient Philosophers are compar'd with the most ignorant and vicious among Christians, yet they are infinitely inferior even in Moral Science to our learned and more accomplish'd Men. Since the Saviour of the World has publish'd his Divine Revelation, and brought Life and Immortality to Light, his Followers being instructed in his heavenly Doctrines, were the better enabled to discover the Duties of Natural Religion, which otherwise they would not have done but in a very lame and imperfect Manner; so that in this
Sense

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Sense we owe in a great Measure the rational Demonstration of Moral Duties to the Revelation in the sacred Writings.

I come now to define a Law of Nature, which is the Will of God signify'd to Man by the Light of Reason, as the Rule of his Thoughts, Passions, Words, and Actions. The Matter of this Law is something enjoin'd or forbidden. Its Generical Difference, as the Schools express themselves, is the Legislative Authority of the Supream Being, who has the Right of a Governor to our Obedience. The Divine Pleasure must be signify'd or declar'd before it becomes a Law ; for no Man is oblig'd to perform any Thing impossible, which he would be, were he bound by Precepts which he had no Means to know. The specifical Distinction of it consists in the Promulgation or Discovery of the Divine Will by the Faculty of Reason, by which it is distinguish'd from his positive Precepts, which are made known by supernatural Revelation. I shall now undertake to show, by what Steps and clear Inferences Human Reason may trace and discern the Origin of our Duty prescrib'd and dictat'd by Nature as respecting God, Man himself, and his Neighbour.

MAN, as an intelligent Being, has the Power of perceiving the Truth of a first, self-evident Principle, to calculate, compare, and by inferring one Proposition from another, to form a coherent Train of Conclusions. By vertue of this Faculty he contemplates God, as a causeless, independent Mind, and therefore All-sufficient in himself ; and as the Author of all Beings, in the Universe, which he created out of Nothing : And then by Force of this Self-evident Maxim, that nothing can give to another, what it has not in it self to give, he must

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easily

easily infer, that all the Goodness, Energy, Life, and Intelligence, communicated to his Creatures, must be found in an eminent Way collected in this uncreated, self-existent Mind, who must therefore be possess'd of all possible Perfection.

First Law of Nature. It is therefore the Duty of Men to form just and right Conceptions of his Author, and entertain the most honourable and elevated Idea of the Divine Being, that it is possible for his Faculties by their utmost Efforts to conceive. He ought to contemplate, admire and adore the ineffable Dignity and Excellence of his Nature : To bow down his Soul in the profoundest Submission, at the Thoughts of his Greatness and unapproachable Majesty. To celebrate his Praises, and magnify his unlimited and independant Power, Wisdom, and Goodness ; in Conversation with others to speak of him and his glorious Attributes with the highest Esteem, and religious Veneration. To propagate and support the Belief of his Existence, and his infinite Perfections : To confute and discountenance the petulant and prophane Deriders of Religion, and expose the unreasonable Principles of impious Pretenders to Reason and Philosophy. It is evident that this is the Will of God, that we should think of him as he is, and not represent him to our selves or others under a false Idea. This then is the first Law of Nature discover'd by the Light of Reason.

THUS much is due to God consider'd in any absolute Sense : But if we contemplate him under the several Relations he bears to Man, we shall see with Admiration the Streams of Moral Duties resulting, as natural Emanations, from those Fountains, and propagating their Branches in distinct Order and beautiful Variety.

WHEN

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WHEN a Man reflects, that he has receiv'd his Existence from the Deity, and all the Faculties and Accomplishments of his Being, he will readily grant that God is his absolute owner; as said before; and if so, that it is the Will of God; that his Creature should acknowledge his Maker's Right in him, and Dominion over him, as his Proprietor, and his unlimited Power to dispose of him at his Pleasure; this being an uncontested Maxim of right Reason, that every one may do whatever he pleases with any Thing entirely his own. That Man should submit himself to the Divine Will; and by an humble and absolute Resignation of himself, acquiesce with Patience and Content in all the various Dispensations of Providence. That he should not complain or murmur against his Lord and Owner, and arraign him as a severe or unjust Master; if he allots him but a mean and narrow Fortune; afflicts him with Sicknes, Losses and Calamity, suffers his Estate to be wrested from him by Fraud or Violence, or his good Name and Reputation to be blemish'd and violated by the Malice of his Enemies. That, on the other hand, if he is possess'd of a plentiful Estate, of Health, Beauty, Power, and Esteem, he should acknowledge he owes these Blessings to the Divine Good-Will: That he has but a subordinate and dependent Right, and is possess'd of them but in Trust for the Honour, Interest, and Service of his Sovereign Master, to whom he is accomptable for his Management.

AND when a Man considers that God is likewise the Creator of all other Rational, Animate, and Inanimate Natures, and that he upholds their Beings by his constant Aid and Concurrence; as the universal Cause; he will with ease discern; that by

his Titles of Creation and Conservation, he has the absolute and plenary Right of a Proprietor in all other Things, as well as in Man himself. That he is the Supreme and sole Lord of the Universe without Limitation or Circumscription, and that all his Creatures are wholly his own. What we mean by saying any Thing is one's own, is perhaps better understood by that simple Term, as it happens in many other Instances, than by the most labour'd Definition : A Power to rule and dispose of a thing at one's Pleasure and Discretion, is imply'd essentially in the Notion of Propriety, or results immediately from its Nature.

AND therefore tho' the inherent Goodness of the Divine Nature inclines him always to do good to Men, and not to treat them hardly, or to make them miserable ; yet however he should dispose of them, they being absolutely and without Restriction his own, they could not justly complain of any Wrong done them. This, I say, had been their Case, had not their Maker accepted to be their Governor, and thereby declar'd he would rule them by Laws as Rational Creatures ; by which he has signify'd his Pleasure, that he will not use and dispose of Men as he is their unlimited Lord and Proprietor, but will deal with them as a Magistrate and Judge, and reward and punish them according to their Submission or Disobedience to his Precepts.

FROM this Relation of God as universal Proprietor of the World, the following Duties evidently arise ; That we should acknowledge his Sovereign and unrestrain'd Dominion, as he is the Owner of all Things. That we should acquiesce and remain satisfy'd, however it pleases him to make the Repartition of States and Kingdoms, to canton the
World

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World among his Creatures, and confer Dominion, Possessions, and Honour on whom, and in what measure he thinks fit. We should not be uneasy, or look with an envious Eye on theirs, who are Wealthy, Great, and Prosperous, tho' we see no Distinction of Parts, Vertue, or Merit, that should entitle them to such Advantages, or ever made it probable they should be so happy and successful: We should sit down contented with the Distribution made by Divine Providence, when we consider that our Maker gives nothing but what is entirely his own; and that therefore we receive no Injury from his Conduct. He has Authority to allot to every Individual what Portion of the good Things of this Life he pleases, and to continue them as long in their Possession as he thinks convenient; and therefore we should not by Fraud or Violent invade the Fences of another's Right.

THO' the Property of Men in respect of God is delegated and precarious, yet in respect of Men it is protected and guarded by the Law of Nature against the Encroachments of Force and Deceit. This Property is originally founded in the Distinction or Individuality of Persons; for every Particular having a Right to his own Life, and it being the will of God that he should maintain and preserve his Life, he has a just Claim to so much as is necessary to attain this end. And this general Right is sometimes determined by seizing on that which was not appropriated or enjoy'd before; and that Seizure will give a Man a Title and justify his Possession; for by not dispossessing any other Person, he does no body any Wrong, and is therefore a lawful Owner. And this is the Case of the Planters of any Country that was not inhabited before, or of those who make Settlements on Places, where there is immensely more waste and desolate

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Territory than will suffice for a few wild and vagrant Natives. Or else Property is determin'd by Consent and Agreement, and the Boundaries set by Compact ; which being done, Man by the Law of Nature, is forbidden and restrain'd from taking what is another's without his Consent. On the contrary, it is his Duty to assist and protect his Neighbour against all Oppression and fraudulent Encroachments, as far as the Rules of right Reason or the Laws of the Society, of which he is a Member, will bear him out.

FARTHER, if we consider that God is the sole Author of our Existence, and that with his constant and powerful Concurrence, as a continu'd efficient Cause, he upholds our needy and dependent Being ; that he bestows upon us out of his free and undeserv'd Bounty, all the Necessaries, Conveniencies, and Enjoyments of Life ; that he commiserates our Calamities, relieves our Wants, prevents our Fears, supports our Hopes, and removes or mitigates our Pain and Trouble ; the Inference will be unavoidable, that we should esteem and love him as our Father, our Patron, our Protector, and greatest Benefactor : That we should admire and praise him for his Goodness, his gracious Disposition and Benevolence, and make all possible Returns that become a grateful Mind to one that has done us so much Good ; to whom we are indebted for whatever we possess, and on whom we depend for all Things that we hope to enjoy. That we should thankfully acknowledge him as the Author of our flourishing and prosperous Condition, and of all the Successes and happy Events that have attended our Industry and Endeavours, and should employ our Power and Plenty, and Interest among Men, for the Honour and Service of our great Benefactor. That we should rely on
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his gracious Nature and readiness to do us Good, even under the severest Dispensations of his Providence ; invoke him in Danger, trust him in Distress, and in the Midst of Trouble and Calamity cast upon him the Burden of Sorrow ; and by the unshaken Belief of his Compassion and Goodness, and that he is able and willing to relieve those that confide in him, as well as from our Experience of his merciful Nature and paternal Piety, we should make him our Refuge and the Foundation of our Hope.

THE Author of Nature has implanted in our Minds so great a Disposition to be grateful, and the Judgement and Determinations of Reason are so full and positive about it, that nothing which we are oblig'd to perform appears so clear, easy and reasonable a Duty. Hence all Mankind in all Ages, have condemn'd and detested Ingratitude, as the most unnatural, most unbecoming and odious Crime *.

HENCE some have made it a Question, whether a Man does not lie under a Moral Obligation to esteem, love, and praise a Benefactor, without Respect to any Law or Precept concerning it ; and if it were possible for me to conceive how there can be any Duty which does not result from some Command of a Governor who enjoins it, or that any Guilt can be contracted without Disobedience to some Rule prescrib'd, I think Gratitude would appear a Vertue, and Unthankfulness a Crime in

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* *Quæ natio, non Comitatem non benignitatem, non gratum animum, Beneficii que memorem non diligit? Quæ superbus, quæ maleficos quæ crudeles, quæ ingratos non aspernatur, non odit? — Cic. de Leg.*

a conspicuous Manner. But since it is so just, so natural, and so laudable a Thing to be thankful for good Offices done, and Favours receiv'd ; upon this Account we may justly assert, that it is one of the clearest and most early Dictates of Reason ; whence it appears to be a plain Declaration of the Mind and Will of God ; and therefore Gratitude is a most evident Law of Nature.

Of MORAL OBLIGATIONS respecting
our selves.

I COME now to the Duties which respect our selves, and shall establish them on their natural Foundations. The Idea of Creator unavoidably implies the Notion of Goodness and Benevolence to his Creatures ; and therefore when we consider him as such, that is, as one that wishes well to Mankind, intends Good to them, and desires their Happiness, we may infer with the clearest Evidence, that it is his Will that Man ought to do good to himself, and to use all Means in his Power to promote his own Felicity. This Conclusion is with some Self-evident Principle, and they look on it as unnecessary to prove so clear a Proposition, *That all Men should do what is best for themselves.* But I have demonstrated this to be a Moral Obligation, that it may plainly appear that Piety and Happiness are not only inseparable, but that in Effect they are the same Thing, and distinguish'd only by various Modes of Conception and a different Appellation. The Assertion of the Schools, *That Bonum Morale fundatur in Bono Conventientie*, that Moral Duty is founded in Convenience, that is, in a Physical Good, is very right, if understood in the Sense that I have given : That is, when a Man discerns that any Thing is advantageous and beneficial to him, that it conduces to
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the Health of his Body and the Quiet of his Mind; to his Improvement in Knowledge, or the Acquisition of the good Things of this Life, he may thence discover it is the Will of God he should endeavour to attain it by all warrantable Means; and therefore what was his Interest before, now becomes his Duty. This is so evident, that I shall hereafter take this Proposition as granted, *That it is the Will of God that Man should desire and peruse every Thing beneficial to himself, and conducive to his Happiness;* and without repeating it often, I shall use this as a Principle of my following Conclusions, and whenever I have shown that any Thing is commodious and promotes his Felicity, I shall take it as allow'd, that Man is under a Moral Obligation to pursue it.

THE highest Interest and first Duty of Man, that respects himself, is to discern and make Choice of the true final Object of his Happiness, which can be no other than the Supreme Being; who to speak in Conformity to the Manner of Human Conception, design'd and intended himself as the ultimate End of Man; and accordingly dignify'd his Mind with Capacities to know, chuse, love and enjoy his Maker, whence his perfect Felicity would effectually result. It is a plain Manifestation of the Will of the Creator, that his Creature should act in Conformity and Agreement to the Principles implanted in his Constitution, and pursue the Purposes for which he gave him suitable Powers and Dispositions. That Man should behave himself as becomes a reasonable Being, that he should exercise his Faculties on their most excellent and proper Objects, and contemplate, admire, love and adore the Supreme Efficient and final Cause of all Things. That all his Desires, Aims and Endeavours should in a due Subordination be directed

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to his Honour and Service ; and that the Chain and Connexion of inferior and superior Ends should be kept unbroken, and never terminate till they reach the highest, that is, the blest Creator. That he should not debase the Dignity of his Nature, and prostitute his elevated Capacity, by forming any mean Designs and Schemes of Life unbecoming and unworthy of a Being endow'd with Thought, Reason, and a Self-determining Principle, created and qualify'd to make his Divine Author his chief Felicity ; for that would be to rob God of his Honour, by seperating his Creature from that Dependance and subserviency to himself, in which he has plac'd him, and as much as in Man lies to disappoint him of his Design in Creation.

AND it is farther evident, That Man should own and chuse the Author of his Being as his chief and ultimate End from this Consideration, That the Felicity and utmost Perfection of this Nature consists in this Choice. The Supream being only has Goodness suitable and adequate to the Faculties of an intelligent Nature, commensurate to his widest Capacities and most extensive Desires, always present and at hand, and lasting and durable as his Being : In short, since the Divine Being only is able and willing to succour and support him, to prevent his Dangers, relieve him in Distress, supply his Wants, and raise his Nature to a State of Perfection, he only can be the final Object and the Supream Good, the Possession of which must be his Happiness.

AND we are in Possession of this Supream Good when our Faculties bear a perfect Conformity to his Will, and we attain the highest Similitude to the Divine Nature that our own can bear ; which, the

tho' unattainable here, is the reasonable and delightful Expectation of good Men in a Future State of Life ; for when we have all the Knowledge of the Creator, which our Understandings are capable of receiving, we enjoy the Beatifick Vision ; and when we love him with all the Powers of the Soul, we are in Heaven, or a State of Perfection. From the Operations of our Faculties about their Supream Good, results that strong, serene and pure pleasure, that ineffable Complacency and Fullness of Joy, which produce consummate Bliss : And this is what we mean by the Possession or Fruition of the Supream Being.

AND indeed the sincere and solid Satisfaction, the intellectual, divine, and spiritual Delights, which proceed from the Practice of Vertue, from a consciousness of having done well, and the self-applauding Reflection, which all good Men experience, and some excellent and elevated Minds more fully and constantly perceive, will convince the Possessors, that were those Pleasures perfect and without interruption, they would want nothing to make their Happiness compleat. Tho' I have before demonstrated, that God is the ultimate End of Man from the Design he had in creating him, which could be only to please himself ; and have now made the same Conclusion evident, by shewing, that he is the supream Good, the Attainment of which can only constitute our Felicity ; yet these are in effect the same thing, and differ only in the Mode of Conception : For the Creator's Design in making of Man is accomplish'd, when to his Honour he manifests his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness in the highest Degree of which our Being is receptive, in which the Happiness of Man does likewise consist. So that the Glory of the Divine Attributes exhibited in the Perfection and

Felicity of Human Nature, must be the supream Good and principal End of Man.

THERE was a strange variety of Opinions in the ancient Schools of the *Greek* Philosophers about the *Summum Bonum*, or supream Good. Some contended with Vehemence, that nothing could be esteem'd Good but what was Vertuous ; and others warmly disputed for the Goodness of other Things, as Health, Honour, and Possessions. *Cicero*, as Moderator, endeavours to accommodate the Matter, and reconcile the Parties, by stating the Controversy in this manner : Those, *says he*, who maintain nothing is Good but Vertue, take Goodness in a Moral Sense, and so their Notion is right ; and those who contend for the Goodness of other Things are to be understood in a Physical Sense, as meaning, that such Things are convenient, useful, or advantageous to Mankind ; and thus, *says he*, their Controversies are more about Words than Things. Another Sect asserted, that Pleasure was the chief Good, which they plac'd in the Indolence of the Body, and Tranquility of the Mind. But it is certain that human Felicity cannot consist in inaction, otherwise Men in a Swoon, a deep Sleep, or a senseless Lethargy, would be extremely happy. But had their Assertion been, that Pleasure was the supream Good, and had they made that Pleasure arise or result from consummate Piety and Vertue, and the highest Operations of the Mind endow'd with perfect Faculties, they had given a good Account of the Happiness of Man.

HAVING thus clearly shewn, that God is the chief Good and ultimate End of Man ; it does as clearly follow, that Man should acknowledge and chuse him as such. That we should prefer him in our Esteem and Desire above all other Things.
That

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That we should make him the Object of our most ardent, sincere, and exalted Love. Think on him with that Delight and Complacency with which Men contemplate the Things in which they place their Happiness ; maintain a sacred Commerce and Correspondence with him ; and by imitating his Perfections, strive to resemble him ; that from a Similitude of Natures he may appear most amiable to us, and we agreeable and pleasing to him.

WHEN the Understanding directs and approves, and the Will is fix'd and determin'd in the Choice of the Divine Being, as the *Summum Bonum* and the final Object of our Happiness ; when all the inferior Powers of the Soul, the Passions, Appetites, and the Senses, are mov'd and govern'd by the superior commanding Faculties, in conformity to the Divine Precepts dictated by right Reason : When this End, I say, is principally and prevalently intended in all our Designs, Aims, and Endeavours, and constantly and regularly pursu'd through the whole Series of our Actions, in all the Stages and Schemes of Life, there arises in the Mind such inexpressible Satisfaction and Divine Pleasure, as are far better felt by the Possessor, than express'd by the most lively Representation of Words. The Tranquility and Delight that flow from the Harmony and moral Rectitude of the Faculties, and pious Emotions of the Mind, are like the Pleasure and Alacrity which are felt from a Sense of Life, Health, Strength and Vigour, resulting from the Abundance and Vivacity of the Spirits in a happy Constitution of Body. When a Man is conscious that he pleases the Author of his Being, he cannot fail of being pleas'd with himself : when he is sure that he esteems, desires, and seeks the Possession of him as the final Object of his Felicity, that he does in a prevalent degree direct his Actions to this

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End, and has therefore a reasonable Expectation of acquiring at last the enjoyment of his Wishes ; when, I say, a Man is in such Circumstances, he must needs be at ease, and feel himself very happy. And thus it appears that Religion is our greatest Interest, and that Vertue in this Sense is its own Reward : For what greater Recompence for his good Actions can a Man ask or receive, than the Perfection of his Nature ? And in what is That to be found, but in the most religious Regularity of his Faculties, and their purest and most exalted Operations towards the Divine Object of our Happiness.

ALL the Goodness of Human Nature consists in its being refer'd and becoming subservient to this great End ; and when we cut off our Relation to the Creator as the final Object of our Felicity, we destroy all that is valuable in our Being, and while other Creatures conspire in constant Harmony to attain the Ends for which their Natures are fitted and design'd, and by no deviation, reluctance, or seditious opposition, dissolve the Union or disturb the Tranquility of the Universe, degenerate Man only opposes the Intention of his Creator, and breaks the Connexion and Order of Things. Besides, by making himself a deform'd and irregular Part, he grows the Dishonour and Reproach of the Creation, and by crossing the Design of his Existence, he annihilates the usefulness of his Being ; and becoming an impertinent and insignificant Creature, he is in a moral and spiritual Sense look'd on as deceas'd, and is number'd among the Dead. And is it not more desir'd to lie mouldring and corrupting in the Grave, than to carry about a putred Mind inter'd in a living Body ?

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NOR do Men by not chusing the Supream Being for their final Good, make themselves only useless Parts, exorbitant and lifeless Excrescences of the World, but they likewise become hurtful and pernicious ; if they are not for God they are against him, if they are not his Friends they are his Enemies ; and if they do not promote the End and Purpose of their Existence, of necessity they must thwart and oppose it. And what a Figure must a Being make in the Creation, that declares himself an Enemy to his Maker, resists and traverses his Designs, and as much as in him lies disturbs the Peace and subverts the Foundations of the Divine Government ? And is it not easy to see that such Enormities are forbidden by the Dictates and Laws of right Reason ; and that to avoid them we are oblig'd to esteem, love and seek the Enjoyments of our Maker as our final Felicity.

MEN are therefore oblig'd to direct all their Aims and Endeavours to this Mark, and to propose no Scheme of Life that does not maintain a due Connexion of each inferior with the supream End.

HE that stops short in his Esteem and Love, destroys his Subordination and Dependence on his Author, as his sovereign Good and Happiness ; deposes his Lord and Benefactor, and advances some created Thing, which he values more, and loves better, to his Throne and Dignity ; he either idolizes his own Qualifications, or deifies his Gold, or pays Divine Adoration to the Pleasure of Sense.

As God is the first efficient Cause from whence proceed all the Powers and operative Principles,
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which are propagated through the long Series of second and subaltern Causes ; so likewise he is of necessity the final Object, to which, after all their long Circulation and Variety of Motion and Mutation, they must return : And as in a physical Manner, all the Beings of the animate and inanimate World, all Energy and active Springs conspire to promote this Purpose ; so the noble Principle of Thought, the Power of Perception and Self-determination in Man, should be subservient and directed to the same End. If our Actions therefore do not flow from a pious Principle of Obedience to the Divine Laws, and are not also aim'd and directed to him as our chief Good and ultimate End, let the Matter of them be ever so specious and illustrious, they cannot pretend to any Moral Goodness, as wanting their Relation to the chief End, which is the vital and essential Principle that quickens and informs them, and whence they are constituted Moral and Religious.

AND supposing the regular Chain and beautiful Connexion of final Causes is interrupted, before it reaches our Divine Author as the ultimate End, not only no Piety, Vertue or Goodness will be found in those Actions, but on the contrary, they will be morally Evil, being irregular and repugnant to the Rules and Dictates of right Reason. If my Neighbour caresses me with great Expressions of Kindness, does me good Offices, and constantly heaps new Favours upon me, but in the mean Time has only his own Interest in view, and intends no Good to me, but in the End to make me useful to himself, can he be accounted my Friend, or esteem'd my Benefactor ? In like Manner, if a Man by his Actions, which are denominated religious are vertuous only in respect of their Matter,

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Matter, designs not in the first Place the Honour of his Maker and the Enjoyment of him as his final Happiness, but principally seeks some inferior End, whether, Riches, Honour, or the Pleasures of Sense, can such a Person be look'd on as a good Man, and sincerely devoted to the Service of his Creator.

THOSE celebrated Heroes and Leaders of Armies, who in their great Undertakings chiefly aim at Fame, Popularity, Possessions or Dominion, and do not carry their Design farther, that is, to advance the Honour and Service of their Divine Sovereign, acquire no Trophies or Laurels but what are the Ignominious Marks of their Immorality and want of Piety ; for while impell'd by an irregular Principle they defend their Country against the Violence and Oppression of Ambitious Neighbours, and so far merit the Applauses of the People, they themselves break in upon the Frontier of Religion, and encroach on the Rights and Prerogatives of Heaven.

WE admire a great Philosopher that is able to solve the most difficult and abstruse Appearances, and with unwearied Application has search'd and laid open all the Springs of Motion, and form'd an admirable System of Natural Science ; we applaud the Poet, who entertains and instructs the World with good Sense and beautiful Expression, recreates the Reader with an Effusion of Wit and Humour, and shews the greatest Regard to Decency and Vertue, arising from his true Taste and right Judgement of Men and Things : Nor do we less Commend the Moralist, who teaches the People the unwritten Precepts of Religion and the Obligation of Natural Duties, with clear Arguments and persuasive Eloquence ; yet if either of these

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chiefly aim at Esteem, Honour, and the Reputation of a Man of great Genius, refin'd Parts, and uncommon Erudition, he only makes his Court to himself, and complements his own Perfections; and tho' the Matter of his Actions be ever so shining and amiable, yet being perverted from their right End, and principally intended to sooth his own Vanity, they become evil and irreligious. I have enlarg'd on this Subject in the *ESSAY upon FALSE VERTUE*, to which I refer the Reader, and should not repeat any Thing here, did not the Ground-work and all the Strength that supports our Religion and Happiness rely on the right Choice of our ultimate End. This is the first true and necessary Step in our Way to Blessedness; and if this is not taken right, all our Motions, Designs, and Schemes of Life will not only be an impertinent Train of Errors; but not having our chief End in view, whatever we do in the whole Course of our Actions, we shall go backward and obstruct and oppose our Duty and Interest.

BESIDES, if we aspire after the greatest Accomplishment of our Being, which is but another Expression for our consummate Felicity, we shall see our selves oblig'd to contemplate the Divine Nature, and to imitate his Perfections. For since the Notion of a God implies a Possession of all possible Perfection, the nearer we approach to him, and the greater our Resemblance of him is, the more exalted must be our Minds; and when our Conformity to his Nature is as full and great as our Faculties are capable of Receiving, they have then attain'd their greatest Perfection. Hence the imitation of the Divine Purity, Justice, Mercy, Compassion, Forgiveness, Patience, and Benificence, which tend to form in us a God-like Temper of Mind, conduces directly to our compleat Happiness;

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ness; and hence the Moral Obligations to perform those Duties is very manifest

AND as our Similitude to the Supream Being in the Exercise of Vertue, raises and ennobles our Nature, so it is a necessary Means to qualify us for the Fruition of him, that is, of becoming Happy; for Love being the Faculty by which we enjoy any Object, if our Natures are wicked and flagitious, they are opposite and unlike to that of the Deity: And since the essential Idea of Felicity consists in the Delight and Complacency that results from the purest and strongest Operations of Love to our Maker, and the reciprocal Sense of his Benevolence to us, no Man without a Likeness and Conformity to the Divine Being can possibly be happy; and thus too the Obligation of the Moral Duties abovementioned is very evident.

THIS Position being fully demonstrated, That the Fruition of God by the most perfect Operations of the Mind, the clearest Knowledge, the highest Admiration, and most intense Love, whence Extasies of Joy and Divine Pleasure will constantly flow, is the chief End of Man; it follows with the plainest Evidence, that Man should delight himself in the Contemplation of this Object of his Happiness, and pursue it with the most vehement Desire, and ardent Affection. When any Man, determin'd by an erroneous Understanding and distemper'd Inclinations, makes some inferior Good, either Riches or Dominion, Fame or Pleasure, his superior and prevalent Choice, how amiable does the Idea appear in his Imagination? How eagerly, how constantly and with how much Satisfaction does he revolve it in his Mind? It attends him by Day, accompanies him to his Bed, and if waking, entertains him by Night; it is the last Object of his Evening and the

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first of his Morning Thoughts. And if he approaches to a nearer View, and has reason to believe he shall, in a short time, possess his Wishes ; how charming is the Prospect ? How chearful is his Temper ? and how delightful are his Hopes ? In like manner, when a Man has chosen the Author of his Being for his final Felicity, he ought to value, admire, and love him with all the Powers of his Soul. To think on him constantly, desire him above all Things, applaud, congratulate, and please himself with frequent Reflections on his happy Choice ; and from the reasonable Prospect of attaining his Happiness, anticipate the Possession by his joyful Expectation.

As the chusing our Maker for our chief Good, directly and immediately regards our Perfection and Happiness, so the inferior Duties which respect our selves plainly promote the same End, as they procure the Health of our Bodies, as they have an apparent tendency to make us easy in our Fortunes and are conducive to the Content and Satisfaction of the Mind.

TEMPERANCE and Sobriety in the Use of the Pleasures of Sense, greatly contribute to the Health and Indolence of the Body, and to keep it in an active and vigorous Constitution ; and by preventing many dangerous and fatal Distempers, they prolong Life, as they make it easy. While the contrary Vices, Riot, Luxury, and immoderate Gratifications of voluptuous Desires, dissipate and exhaust the Spirits, enfeeble the Body, and shorten the Days of the inconsiderate Libertine ; who not only brings upon himself many wasting Distempers and Death it self, but propagates and conveys his Diseases to his Children, and settles a sad Inheritance of Pain and Sorrow on his miserable Posterity

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sterity. From a right Judgment, that the Vertues above-nam'd greatly conduce to our Health and Ease, *Epicurus*, who plac'd all Happiness in the Pleasures of Sense, prescrib'd a moderate and restrain'd use of them, as necessary to the attainment of that End.

BESIDES, Sobriety and Temperance promote our Happiness, by keeping the Spirits lively, the Brain clear, the Imagination free and undisturb'd, by which means the Mind has always apt Instruments for its operations ; while Excess in eating, drinking, and other Delights of Sense, weaken, oppress, and dull the Spirits, and so cloud the Head with Fumes, or fill it with Pain, that the Exercise of our intellectual Faculties is almost suspended ; by which means we are for that Season degraded and sunk to the low Rank of meer Animals, and lose the Dignity, by losing the usefulness of intelligent Beings : And if all those Breaks and Chasms of Life, which in this Sense are occasion'd by the Moral Errors of Men, were sum'd up, by a just Calculation it would appear that their Vices have robb'd them of more Hours than they now imagine.

MOREOVER, their excessive Pursuits of voluptuous Entertainments defraud them of a great deal of Time, which might have been happily employ'd in their useful Callings ; or if they are Men of Leisure and plentiful Fortunes, in improving and adorning their Understanding with variety of Knowledge, or managing their Estates, or serving their Country, and in short, in doing much good to themselves and others.

THESE Vertues, together with Frugality and Industry, greatly contribute to the Ease and Well-being

being of Men, in procuring or preserving their Possessions by restraining their Appetites, and bounding their Pleasures ; whilst by a prudent Management they save, and by good Oeconomy. augment their Substance, on which their own Comfort and the Prosperity of their Families so much depend. But on the other hand, how does Luxury and a vicious Course of Life promote the contrary Ends ? How soon does it ruin a small Estate, and what Havock does it make in the most plentiful ? And by this Waste and Dissipation of their Treasure, how uneasy does it make them in their Fortune ? How often are they pinch'd and streighten'd in their Circumstances, and compell'd to descend to mean and sordid, and sometimes evil Practices, to support their Expence, and supply the Demands of their tyrannical Appetites ? Hence their disconsolate Families are impoverish'd, their Children depriv'd of Education and Maintenance, and left to struggle with Want and Misery.

THAT the Moderation and Government of the Passions conduces to the Felicity of Human Nature, has been allow'd by all the *Pagan* Philosophers, who have taught Morality, and search'd after the *Summum Bonum*, or Happiness of Mankind ; and for this they have left many excellent Precepts. This Duty is indeed absolutely necessary to the Peace and Tranquility of the Mind, without which it is impossible to be happy. If violent and exorbitant Emotions, that have shook off the Yoke of the superior Faculties, and are no longer obedient to the Dictates of Reason, are convenient, useful, or delightful, then Storms and Tempests are more desirable than fair Weather ; and Uproar, Confusion and Distraction, should be prefer'd to Peace, Beauty and Order. If unbridled Anger and brutal Rage do not interrupt our Happiness and abate the

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Perfection of our Nature, then a Fever is no Disease of the Body, nor a Phrensy of the Mind. If Pride, Self-admiration, Haughtiness, and an insolent Contempt of others, are desirable Qualities, then to be always disappointed of our End, and to feel the constant Resentments of real or imaginary Affronts, Neglect and Injuries, is to be very happy. Are Envy, Hatred, and a malicious revengeful Temper to be fed and cherish'd, as not only unhurtful, but conducive to our Good? Then to be stung to the Heart, to be torn to pieces, and devour'd with inward Cares, anxious Designs and self-tormenting Thoughts, has been unjustly represented as a miserable Condition. If any Man can possibly believe these inordinate Passions are not very painful and uneasy to the Mind, it must be one who never felt their lawless Power. Whoever has experienc'd their Dominion will readily complain, that he has extreamly suffer'd, and been very ill us'd by these unreasonable and cruel Masters. Whence it appears, that in order to Happiness, we are under no less Obligations to regulate our Passions, than to restrain our Appetites.

BESIDES, licentious and ungovern'd Passions are very prejudicial to the Mind, by clouding the Understanding, perverting the Judgment, and putting a wrong Bias on the Will: They raise such thick Mists and *Egyptian* Fogs before the Eyes of our intellectual Guide, that it constantly loses its way, and becomes guilty of the greatest Errors. These heady Perturbations fill the Mind with Tumult and Uproar, assault with Violence the Tribunal of Reason, compel it to reverse the Judgments and Determinations made in cold Blood, and pronounce new Decrees in favour of the contrary Side. During this Disorder and Insurrection of the Passions, the Mind holds unsteadily the Reins of Government,
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till at last her Authority is insulted and suspended; and in this Interregnum, for so this Interval of Confusion may be stil'd, the Dictates and Operations of the superior Faculties being either suppress'd or disregarded, the Man dishonours and vilifies the Dignity of his Nature, and acts like the Beast of the Field from an unreasonable Principle, and a brutal Instinct. And if the Violence of Passion is not arriv'd at so great a Degree, as quite to subvert the Exercise of Reason, yet in whatever Measures it gains upon us, it will in Proportion disable the Understanding, and misguid the Judgement, whence our Actions will become irregular: Anger, Resentment, and Love rais'd to Excess, by being an over-match for the Prudence and Discretion even of wise Men, often make them act below the Superiority and Gravity of their Character, and bring them down to the ordinary Rank and Level of Mankind.

THAT exorbitant and unruly Emotions of the Mind pervert the Judgement, and cause Disorder and Confusion in the Operations of the upper Faculties, is plain from hence. That when the Tide subsides and the Storm is blown over, our Minds in this calm and sedate Season condemn and rescind the Decisions, which, during the Rebellion of the turbulent Passions, they were mov'd by Violence and Constraint to make.

Of MORAL OBLIGATIONS *in* *respect to our Neighbour.*

AS to the Duties incumbent on Man in his relative Capacities, their Moral Obligation comes now to be demonstrated. We cannot contemplate the Author of our Being, but we must conceive

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conceive him full of Good-Will, and desirous of the Welfare of Mankind ; and he that makes this Reflection, will unavoidably discern, that it is the Will of his Maker, that he should contribute to the Good of others, and promote their Happiness. And will further see himself oblig'd to this, if he considers, that because God wishes well to Men, and heaps Blessings and Favours upon them, he ought to do the same ; since he cannot reach the Perfection of his Nature, in which consists his Felicity, except he imitates the Supreme Being, as before-mention'd. Hence it will appear, That the Government of Families is of Divine Institution, that Parents ought to rule their Children, and Masters their Servants ; that they ought to instruct their Understandings, and adorn them with Divine and Human Knowledge ; to direct their Wills in their Choice, and restrain their immoderate Appetites ; to teach them the Government of their Passions, and give them all the Advantages of good Education.

MAN's Title to this Government arises from his imperfect Propriety in his Children, and from his Qualifications for Government, and theirs for Obedience, as well as from his Obligation to exercise this Authority, which he cannot omit without Guilt, and which proceeds from the Signification of the Will of God, by placing man in such Circumstances and endowing him with such Capacities ; as likewise, by making it a necessary Means to promote the Happiness of Mankind, that Parents should rule, instruct, and provide for their Families. And the like may be said of Masters in respect of their Servants, tho' their Propriety in these is in a lower Degree.

THE Order of this Discourse requires, That I should now enter upon the Moral Obligations that Men are under, considering as Members of the Civil Society, and make those Duties appear which Sovereigns owe to Subjects, Subjects to Sovereigns, or one Subject to another ; but I have reserv'd the Two first for a distinct Dissertation, and shall only in this Place insist on the last.

Of RELATIVE DUTIES from
one Subject to another.

THERE are many Duties from one Member of a Society to another, which do not result from Human Laws, but flow immediately from the Fountain of Morality, the Light of Reason.

Of these I mention'd several in the Beginning of this Discourse, where I asserted, that *de facto* there were divine Laws antecedent to all human Authority, and acknowledg'd as such by all Nations of the World ; and from their Conformity to these Laws, many Qualities or Habits derive their Moral Goodness ; for Instance, Humanity, Candor, Benevolence, Integrity, and Faithfulness, of which the Civil Magistrate is no Judge. I shall now endeavour to demonstrate the natural Obligation we lie under to exercise these and the like Vertues.

ONE Neighbour is bound by the Dictates of Reason, to pity the Sufferings of another and to mitigate his Sorrow, to be touch'd by his Misfortunes, and rejoice at his Prosperity and Success. It is his Duty to supply his Neighbour's Wants
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and Necessities, to acquaint him with his Danger, and give him Assistance to prevent it; to instruct him, if Ignorant, of what relates to his Happiness, dissuade him from a vicious, idle, or pernicious Course of Life, and excite him with convincing Reasons, and important Persuasions to embrace the Ways of Religion and Vertue. It is his Duty to do him good Offices, to express Affection, Beneficence, and Generosity; to forgive Unkindness, Affronts and Injuries, upon the Submission and Entreaty of the Offender; to avoid Envy, Malice, and Revenge; to love his Neighbour as himself, and an Enemy too, as far as to endeavour to make him a Convert, and promote his Happiness. All these Precepts are the Dictates of right Reason, and they are deduc'd from this Maxim, That every Man ought to do to another, as he would be done by in the like Circumstances. Can a hard-hearted and cruel Person, who is not touch'd with the Sufferings and Calamities of another, but shuts up the Bowels of Tenderneſs and Compassion to his Brother in Want and Nakedness, with Reason expect, that if by the Vicissitude of Humane Affairs he himself should be brought to the like Extremities, that his Neighbours should express their Commiseration of his Calamity, be troubled for his Misfortunes, and administer Comfort and Supplies to his Necessities? Can any Man reduc'd to a low Condition, with Reason, complain of Wrong and Violence, who when in Power and Plenty, oppress'd his Inferiors, tramp'l'd on their Rights, wrested from them their Goods, and with an Iron avaricious Hand griped the Widow and the Fatherless? Can he expect to be forgiven, who is himself deaf and inexorable, and will never pardon? Can he who delights in Censoriousness and Detraction, in Justice hope that his Honour and good Name should be guarded by others? This Axi-

om, that every Man should so use another as he would be us'd himself, is allow'd by general Consent to be the Rule of Action that all Men ought to observe. And its Reasonableness or moral Obligation is clearly deduc'd from its Aptitude and Tendency to promote the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind: For if Men behav'd themselves in Conformity to this Precept they would not only forbear Violence, Oppression, and Defamation, but would assist, comfort, and relieve their Neighbours, and protect the Persons, Estates, Rights and Reputation of one another; and how far this conduces to the common Good and Felicity of Mankind, need not be express'd.

THUS I imagine I have, with clear and convincing Evidence, demonstrated Morality, and the Distinction between good and evil Actions, according to their Conformity to or Deviations from the Divine Rule of Right Reason.

AND from the same Principle, and by the same Manner of arguing, the natural Obligation of other Duties which I have not nam'd, most of which are more minute and remote than those I have mention'd, may be deduc'd. By which Means a compleat System of Ethicks would be compil'd, and establish'd on the certain Foundation of Divine Authority; whence Morality and Piety, Vertue and Religion, would appear the same Thing under different Conceptions and Appellations, arising from the same Spring, regulated by the same Divine Will, and respecting the same ultimate End, the Honour of the Supream Being, and the Felicity and Perfection of Human Nature.

SINCE by the natural Dictates of Right Reason it is evident, That the Supream Being is the Governor

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vernor of Mankind, and rules the World by declar'd Laws ; and since Judgement is a necessary Branch of Government, it follows with the clearest Evidence, that God, by being the Governor of Man, becomes his sovereign Judge, and therefore will bring to an Account the Creature whom he has made accomptable, and will acquit or condemn, punish or reward him in Proportion to his Obedience, or Deviation from the Rule of his Actions.

Now it is very plain, that in this Life God erects no Tribunal for the impartial Distribution of Rewards and Punishments ; he, by no solemn Sentence clears the Innocent, or condemns the Criminal, nor consigns them to a State of Happiness or Misery, according to their Demeanor ; which I have taken Notice of in another Essay.

It has been the Observation and Complaint of many wise and good Men, besides *Job* and *David*, that the impious Contemners of Religion, and Men of an immoral and dissolute Life, not only go unpunish'd in their impudent and enormous Vices, but thrive and prosper in an eminent Degree ; and after a long Life in Health, Plenty, and Pleasure, go down to the Grave in Peace : While, on the other hand, those who have express'd the sincerest Zeal for Religion, and deserv'd well of their Country by their excellent Examples and constant Course of vertuous and great Actions, have been defam'd, oppress'd, and expos'd to all the Sufferings and Calamities that the Wit of their Enemies could invent, and their Cruelty inflict. Now to vindicate the Justice of God, the Honour of his Government, his Love to Vertue, and the Purity of his Nature ; what can be alledg'd but this, That he has reserv'd for another World the great
Day

Day of Accompt, when all Men shall appear before his Judgment-Seat, there to be consign'd by an impartial Sentence, to a State of Misery or Happiness, according to their past Demeanor.

AND indeed the Remorse and Trouble that wicked Actions leave in the Mind of the Criminal, as well as the Chearfulness and inward Pleasure that follow the Practice of Vertue, very much facilitate our Belief of a future Day of Accompt. Men who dishonour and vilify their excellent Nature, by overturning the Government and despising the Divine Authority of Right Reason, and suffer themselves to be led away and rul'd by their animal Instincts and vicious Passions, not only reflect on their Guilt and Pollution with Shame and Dissatisfaction ; but more, they are often affrighted with the Apprehension of Divine Displeasure, fill'd with secret Fears and terrible Expectations of future Punishment. And tho' perhaps some few hard and desperate Libertines, by frequent Affronts and Insults offer'd to their Reason, repeated Violations of the Laws of Nature and a long Course of Vice, have, perhaps, fatally succeeded in their Attempts, and in a great Measure stifled their inward Light, and suspended the Admonitions of their Reason, yet the generality of Mankind, upon their Commission of great and enormous Crimes, are haunted with an inward Remorse, and a dreadful Prospect of Future Vengeance.

THIS is so true, that *Epicurius* and *Lucretius* declare, That to free Men from the terrible Apprehensions of Future Punishments, which were inconsistent with that Ease and Tranquility of Mind they propounded to themselves, they invented their irreligious Scheme of Philosophy.

ON the other hand, the Men, who by obeying the Dictates of Natural Light and the Divine Canon of Reason, do Justice and Honour to the Rank and Character of intelligent Creatures, when they reflect on the Rectitude of their Faculties and the Moral Improvements of their Minds, the regular Government of their Passions, and their vertuous Actions, not only feel an inward Satisfaction arising from that review, but likewise cherish a delightful Expectation of a suitable Reward from the just Governor of the World ; who, as he has made us accomptable Beings, so at last he will make a Distinction between obedient and rebellious Subjects. Hence the wisest and best Men among the Heathens nourish'd in their Minds a comfortable, tho' uncertain Hope of a future State of Happiness, and believ'd, that a good Man had great reason to please himself with the Opinion of the Favour of the Gods ; and that they would, in the end, assert the Justice of their Government, by appointing a different Issue to a vertuous and wicked Life.

IF the universal and righteous Governor of the World must convene all the Nations of his Subjects before him as their supream Judge, to reward the diligent observers of his Laws, and punish those who liv'd in Guilt and Disobedience ; then it plainly follows, that there must be a State of Life after this, in which all Degrees and Ranks of Men must be brought upon their Trial.

AND if there be a future State of Life and a Day of Accompt, it will be a clear Dictate of Natural Light, that Men's Minds should be more taken up with the Thoughts of this great Day, and the Consequences of it, than with all the Affairs and Concerns of this World. That Men should
either

either find out some way to annihilate their Beings, or conceal their Crimes, or elude the just and irreversible Sentence of the Supream Judge; or if that cannot be done, to enter upon such a vertuous Course of Life as will alone avail them in such an Hour, and is alone able to secure them from Divine Displeasure. If those who constantly indulge themselves in sensual Pleasures, or the Pursuits of Wealth and Power, and never reflect on a future State, would deliberate and cast Things together, would lay in one Scale of Reason their present uncertain and transient Enjoyments, and in the other, the immortal State of Pain and Misery, which will be the certain Punishment of their Sin and Folly, they must be infinitely stupid, and their Judgments must be bias'd and overpower'd to Amazement by the Violence of their Passions, or disabled and blinded by their vicious Habits, if they cannot in such a Case see where their Safety and Interest lie.



A N
E S S A Y
UPON THE
O R I G I N
O F
C I V I L P O W E R.

By *Sir Richard Blackmore* Kt. M.D.
and Fellow of the College of
Physicians in *London*.

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ESSAY, &c.

WERE Mankind disengag'd from the Obligations and Restraints of Political Government, the World would become a deplorable Seat of Uproar and Confusion; Cruelty and Injustice, Avarice and Ambition set at Liberty, would make the Kingdoms of the Earth such Scenes of Calamity and Desolation, as would more resemble the Habitations of salvage Beasts, than the Dwellings of Reasonable Beings. As the Lives and Estates of Men in such a Case would be precarious and always lie open to Insults and Rapine from a more powerful Aggressor, so their Minds would continue barbarous and uncultivated, without the Improvements of Science, and the Ornaments of Polite Arts, which are highly beneficial to Mankind. To prevent these Evils and advance the Felicity of Man, the Pleasure of the Supream Being, who wishes the Happiness and prosperous State of his Creatures, is apparent that Men should form Societies and institute Civil Government.

As the Divine Being has made Mankind sociable, and fit for Government, so the Individuals depend so far upon one another for mutual Assistance, and the Supply of each other's Wants, that no Means can be found for their Subsistence without Political Combinations, where Multitudes of Particulars contribute in their several Capacities to the Safety and Happiness of the Whole. If then the wise Creator intended the Preservation and Good of Men, he must likewise intend the necessary Means to acquire that End.

Whence it appears that Men are not at Liberty in this Point, but are under the Obligation of the unwritten Divine Law, to institute Civil Communities for their mutual Defence and Concurrence to each other's Benefit. It is true, there is no Divine Command that prescribes any particular Form of Government into which they shall enter; but here they are free and unlimited, and only lie under the general Obligation of doing what is best for themselves; and therefore they are bound to chuse that Species of Government, whether Monarchical, Aristocratical, or Popular, which, according to their Circumstances, they shall judge most advantageous and subservient to the End of Civil Institutions, that is, the Welfare and Prosperity of the whole Society.

There have been abundance of warm but unnecessary Disputes about the best Frame of Government; while some argue with great Zeal for an Absolute, Despotick Power, some for limited or divided Sovereignty, and others for a Republican or Democratical Constitution, in opposition to both the others. But this is as if the Engineers should sharply contend for any one Plan or Model of Fortification, as necessary or most convenient for every Town or place of Defence, let the Disposition or Nature of the Ground be ever so unlike. That Form of Government which may be most useful, and therefore most eligible to some Nations, may be very improper and inconvenient for others, who, in respect of their Situation, their neighbouring Potentates, the Temper of the People, the Extent of their Territories, and their Traffick and Commerce, are in very different Circumstances. For this Reason all Species of Government are lawful; and it is the Duty of Men, if at liberty, to chuse that which is most expedient, if they have Time to deliberate; and to do what they are able, if they are forc'd, as it often happens, to huddle up a Constitution in haste for their immediate Security.

When any Species of Government is chosen and consented to, the Divine unwritten Command, that made it the Duty of Men to enter into Societies, will oblige them to pay Obedience to it.

The Divine Being, as the Supream Governor of Mankind, and of all Civil Societies, gives to those Communities, that is, to the governing Part, Authority to make Laws for the Subject, which are as By-Laws in respect of the King of Kings ; as those of Corporations and Companies are in respect of the sovereign Magistrate of any Nation. The Commission or Charter of the Moderator of the World to human Legislators, by which they are empower'd to make Orders and Rules for the People, is demonstrated from his Precept, reveal'd by the Light of Reason, that Men should form Societies : which cannot be done, unless some or one govern, and the rest are oblig'd to obey ; and if there must be Governors, they must be endow'd with Authority to make Laws ; for they must be allow'd a sufficient Power to perform their Duty, otherwise they would be oblig'd to do something impossible. This Power they cannot have but from the uncontested Fountain of all Legislative Authority, that is, the supream Monarch of the World ; for he being the sole, universal, and absolute Lord and Ruler of Mankind, it is as impossible to have the least governing Power any other way than from his Charter and Commission, as it is for a Constable, a Justice of Peace, or Corporation of Men, to possess any Civil Authority but what is communicated to them from the supream Magistrate of the Country. Let us contemplate the Divine Being as a Governor, and all the People of the Earth as his Subjects in the great City of the World, and then consider particular Kingdoms and Sovereign States, as Parts and Members of his unlimited Empire, and we shall presently see that all these Potentates are but his inferior Officers, Delegates, or Vice-roys, and therefore can have no Power but what they derive from their supream Lord and Magistrate. Under this View all Princes and Legislative Powers in this universal Monarchy of the World, are such inferior and subaltern Officers as their own subordinate Ministers of State, Generals, and Lords Deputies are in respect of them. Whence the Demonstration is clear, that earthly Sovereigns being no more than Subjects in this Divine Constitution, can have no legal Authority but what they derive from the supream

supream independent Lawgiver This Position that appears so very evident, will serve to demonstrate many important Conclusions, and therefore I have discuss'd it the more largely. But tho' it will be allow'd, that the Legislative Authority of Potentates is delegated and deriv'd from the Divine Being, yet the Mode of Communication or Conveyance of this Power to earthly Monarchs and Magistrates is sharply disputed.

Some deduce the Authority of Princes and States from *Adam's* Paternal Power, which they say contain'd likewise that of a Civil Magistrate ; upon which Hypothesis that Sovereignty which at first was only over one Family, as fast as Men multiply'd, extended it self over all, and the eldest Father became sole Monarch of Mankind, and were he still alive must be the absolute Ruler of the whole World, a pretty difficult Province to manage. Upon *Adam's* decease the Right of Sovereign Power, say they, descended to the next of Blood ; and the Patriarchs were the supream Civil Magistrates, as well as the Lords and Masters of their numerous Families ; and whatever Power any Prince is now invest'd with is deriv'd from that of a Father, descending to him by uninterrupted Succession from our first Parent. This Opinion is attended with great and manifest Absurdities, that offer themselves at first sight to Men of Reflection ; as for Instance, that it confounds the Notions of the Magistrate's Power with that of a Master of a Family, and that it makes it impossible for any Prince to prove his Title to his Crown ; since it is impracticable to deduce the Descent of *Adam's* Paternal Power upon him, without which he has no legal Authority : And supposing he could make good his Claim from that pretended Origin of Dominion, he must by that Evidence have a right to the Government of the World, as our first Parent had, and all other Rulers would be divested of their Power, and be oblig'd to surrender their Monarchies to the Heir of *Adam* ; Tho it is true, Princes may be at ease in the Possession of their Thrones, if they are not interrupted till this Heir be produc'd. But notwithstanding these and a long Train of false Conclusions will

will follow from this Principle, which may be seen in one of our celebrated Writers, who has tully expos'd this Doctrine ; yet it was once so much in Fashion, that Patriarch and Monarch were synonymous Appellations, and those who believ'd otherwise, were look'd on as disaffected Subjects, and no Orthodox Christians.

The unwary Persons, who with great vehemence propagated this Notion of the Origin of Dominion, seem'd willing to extend the Power of the Prince to an absolute and despotick Degree, supposing they should always be able to unsheath the Magistrate's sword, and with that keen Argument effectually confute all their Adversaries, while they were sure to have the Executioner on their side. Many of these express great Reverence to Kings, not as Kings, but as the Heads of their Party, that are ready not only to secure their Rights, but to augment their Power. And that this is the Spring whence their Zeal in maintaining these Principles proceeds, is very plain ; for when a Prince fills the Throne that touches their Interests, that is, refuses to be the Vice-gerent of a Faction, and will not employ his Authority as they direct, their celebrated Passive Obedience becomes Active Resistance, and Prayers and Tears are turn'd into preparations of War, and open Rebellion ; and when-ever their Party-Interests are in Danger, we may always expect from them the same uneasiness and opposition ; for to do them Justice, I cannot believe they advance the Doctrines that favour Despotick and Arbitrary Power, with any Design of enslaving themselves ; but they do it for the Reasons above suggested, that is, that they may share with the Prince his unrestrain'd Authority, and oppress those whom they esteem their Enemies. They would be contented that their Monarch should be as unlimited as the Emperor of the *Turks*, or the great *Mogul*, provided they are his Bashaws and Mandarines, to rule the Provinces, and execute his exorbitant Power ; and without this Limitation I believe they are ready to enter their Protestation against absolute Government.

Others make the People the Origin of Civil Authority, and affirm, that each Individual, by giving up into the
Hands

Hands of one or more Persons, the Power which they have over their own Actions, and that of Self-Defence against an Assailant or Invader, constitutes the Power of the Magistrate; and their Opinion is, that God conveys to Princes and Potentates their Legislative Capacity by this concurrence and union of all private personal Rights; which Collection, say they, produces the publick Right of Governing. Among the Assertors of this Opinion we find the famous Mr. *Hooker*, in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*. But neither do these rightly account for the Rise of Civil Authority; since Personal and Magistratical are distinct Powers, and the People by this Scheme must be suppos'd to convey to the Magistrate a Power of governing, which, in my Opinion, they never had to give, particularly that of putting a Subject to Death. On the contrary, upon Examination, it will appear that God conveys to the Magistrate all his Authority by his unwritten Charter of Commission, express'd and manifested by the Light of Reason, that is, the Law of Nature.

If we consider the supream Being as the unlimited Ruler of the World, and the numerous States and Kingdoms of the Earth as the several Branches or integral Parts of his unconfin'd Empire, in the same manner as various Provinces and Cities compose any one of those States and Kingdoms; how can we suppose that a dependent and subordinate Governor can have any Authority in the Divine Monarchy, which includes all human Dominions, but what must be deriv'd from the Head of the Government? Now God, by the Law of Nature, that obliges Men to enter into Societies for their common Good, declares his Will, that the chosen Magistrates of each Society should be endow'd with sufficient Power to discharge their Duty, and procure the Ends of Government; for the Law of Nature that commands the End, enjoins also the necessary Means to attain it. And thus the Commission of the Supream Being to human Magistrates, constituting their Office, and investing them with Civil Power to execute that Office, is drawn up, ratify'd, and publish'd by the Light of Nature with the same Force and Authority, as if it had been convey'd by Revelation. Let us suppose, for farther illustration, that the

the Moderator of the World had, by a written positive Ordinance in a supernatural way, reveal'd his Will that all Men should combine for their common Safety in publick Communities ; that the Magistrates should be empower'd by such a measure of his Royal Authority, as will render them capable of discharging their Trust, and ruling their Subjects for their Good ; That he left them at liberty to chuse what form or Species of Government they thought best ; and that they might restrain by Fundamental Laws and antecedent Covenants, the power of the Monarch if they consented to that Form of Government, and the Monarch consented to such Limitations ; and that when they had chosen their Magistrate or Magistrates, he did, as supream Ruler, declare they should be commission'd by him as his Royal Deputies and Vice-roys, whom he, their Sovereign, invested with such a degree of Authority as should enable them to procure the Ends of their Government : would it not then appear very plain which way the publick Magistrate came by his Civil Power ? And since I have demonstrated all this to be the Will of God declar'd by the Law of Nature and the Exercise of Reason, is not this as Valid and Canonical as if it were written and signify'd by Revelation ? When the Freemen of the City of London have, by their Suffrages, chosen their Mayor and Aldermen, who, tho' subordinate to their Sovereign, are the supream Magistrates in that Corporation, do not those Magistrates derive their governing Power from their Prince's Charter, or the whole Legislative Power, if their Charter has receiv'd that Confirmation, and not from the collected personal Power that each Inhabitant casts upon them ? Suppose a King of *Great-Britain* should, by a Royal Grant, authorize the People of each County to elect their Lord-Lieutenant, or Sheriff, and declare what measure of Power they should have when they were chosen ; will the People's Election amount to any thing more than a determining of some Branch of the Regal Authority to such particular Persons ? And when they are elected, would not the Power they should claim and exercise in each County, flow from the Prince's Grant, and not the People's Nomination ? In like manner, if the People of any Country have a Right

to elect their supream Magistrates, whether Princes or States, that Country being but a Part and Branch of God's universal Monarchy, when they have nominated and chosen their Magistrates, whether Monarchs or Sovereign States, they being no more than inferior and subordinate Officers in respect of the Divine Being, tho' supream in respect of their own People, or any other earthly Potentate, they must receive all their Civil Authority from the chief Magistrate, who is God himself; and the way by which he conveys it, is his Grant or Commission express'd and signify'd by the Light of Nature, and discover'd by the Exercise of Right Reason in the manner before explain'd.

When Men have form'd Civil Societies, which, as has been said, are so many Companies and corporate Bodies in the Kingdom or City of the World, whereof God is the unlimited Governor, the Measure and Extent of Power with which the Rulers of those Societies are invested, is prescrib'd and ascertain'd by the Commission granted them by their Sovereign, which is their Warrant to govern, and the Rule of their Subjects Obedience. As the Lord-Lieutenant of a Province; or the General of an Army can lawfully exercise no more Power than they are warrant'd and authoriz'd to do by the Commission of their Sovereigns, no more can those Sovereigns who are under Officers of State in the Divine Monarchy, tho' High and Mighty in their own Kingdoms, claim any Jurisdiction, or legally execute any Power but what is contain'd in their Commission.

It is then very evident, that as Ministers and inferior Magistrates, for Instance, a Justice of Peace or a Lord Lieutenant, cannot bind the Subject to Obedience, by commanding any thing out of his Commission, and much less, if against the Laws of his Country, which contain the declar'd Will of the chief Magistrate; no more can the Commands of Princes oblige their Subjects to compliance in things which are contrary to the Laws of God, the chief Magistrate. Nor can they restrain the natural Liberty and Power that Men enjoy over their own Actions, if they are not authoriz'd by the declar'd Will of the chief Ruler so to do, tho' there should not appear in such Commands any contrariety to the Divine Pleasure.

Origin of Civil Power.

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ture; and they are yet more unwarrantable, if they enjoin Things hurtful and prejudicial to the Publick; for such restraints will exceed the Bounds and Measures of their Commission; and how the Subject is oblig'd to demean himself in such Cases shall be afterwards explain'd.

Moral Obligations on Civil Powers.

AS the chief Ministers of Kings and Potentates, their Judges, and other subordinate Magistrates, are bound to promote the Honour of their Princes; to maintain the Peoples Esteem of their Persons and Zeal for their Government; to discountenance and punish the Turbulent and Seditious, and protect the Loyal and well-dispos'd Subject; so it is the Duty of Potentates, who are Ministers, Judges, and Delegates of State in the Divine Monarchy, to take care of their Master's Honour; to manage with Industry and Fidelity his Interests; to promote and preserve in the Minds of the People, the most honourable Opinion, and the highest Veneration of his Person, and the greatest Esteem and Affection to his Government; to discourage and deter profane and flagitious Persons; to suppress and exterminate the Atheist and Blasphemer, the impious Scoffer and petulant Derider of Religion, as the declar'd Enemies of Heaven and contumacious Opposers of Divine Authority. On the other hand, it is their Duty to defend and reward the Good and Virtuous, who reverence and honour their supream Lord, are well affected to his Government, and express a sincere and warm Zeal for his Service.

And this is no more than they themselves expect from those of their Subjects, on whom they confer Posts of Power and Dignity, and whom they intrust with the Administration of publick Affairs. And when Princes act in this manner, and thereby promote the Felicity and Good of their Subjects, as well as their own, they act in Conformity to the Dictates of Reason, or the Law of Nature.

But more particularly it will hence appear, that Princes and Potentates are oblig'd to take care that their Subjects should adore and worship the Divine Sovereign in publick

Assemblies; that they should restrain and punish those that profane his Name by impious Swearing and detestable Execrations; that expose sacred Things and Persons by raillery and ridicule, and by their vicious and profligate Manners dishonour God, and teach others to do the same. What would earthly Potentates think of their immediate Ministers and Officers of State, if they certainly knew that these Men did constantly hear their Royal Persons revild, their Actions expos'd, their Title to their Crowns question'd, and their Government affronted, while they patiently conniv'd at such enormous Offences? And is it not as unnatural and misbecoming the immediate Servants and Vicegerents of the supreme Being, to suffer those Persons to escape with Impunity, who by their dissolute and flagitious Lives, offend against his Laws with Contumacy and Insolence, defy his Justice, and by propagating impious Opinions and loose Manners, declare themselves Traytors to Heaven, and Haters of the Divine Government.

It is further evident that Princes are oblig'd to restrain and punish such licentious Criminals, because nothing more advances the common Good, and promotes the End of entering into Societies; for as Impiety and Profaneness deform the Mind, efface the Similitude of the Divine Nature, and so destroy the perfection of our Faculties; so Vice and Luxury not only bring Diseases on Mens Bodies, but impoverish and ruin their Families: And besides their prevailing Power to bring down Judgments upon a People, they have a natural Tendency to destroy the firmest Constitutions that the Wisdom of Man can invent.

It is to be remark'd, that since the Observance of Vows, Promises and Contracts are absolutely necessary for the preservation of Societies; that when a Potentate has consented to any Limitations and Restraints in the Exercise of his Civil Power, and has bound himself by Covenants and Compacts with the People, to govern them according to the Fundamental Laws of the Constitution, he cannot without transgressing the Law of Nature, exceed those Limitations and Boundaries of his Power; and it will be Illegal and Tyrannical in such a Potentate to exercise a Jurisdiction of an unlimited

limited Extent; and to make any Enchroachments on the Rights and Privileges of the People, which are secur'd by such Original and Fundamental Contracts ; tho the Case is different where the Subjects have consented and submitted to an arbitrary and unlimited Monarchy.

Of Obedience due from Subjects.

THE Law of Nature that obliges Men to form Communities, and consent to some one Species of Government for the common Good and Felicity of the Whole, must likewise lay the Subjects under a Moral Obligation to observe the Laws of their Magistrates, whether the Civil Power be lodg'd in the Hands of one or more Persons. For since their mutual Safety and Happiness are promoted by Civil Government, it is for that Reason an evident Law of Nature, that as Subjects they should pay Obedience to it, without which no Community can be supported : They are therefore for their own sakes, and for the general Good, oblig'd to reverence and honour the supream Magistrate ; to maintain the Esteem and Credit of his Administration ; to yield a chearful Sub mission to the Laws, and prevent and suppress all publick Disturbance and seditious Attempts.

It is true indeed, if the Orders and Injunctions of God's Vice-gerents are contrary to the Laws of the supream Ruler of the World, it is plain in that Case the Divine Being who is the chief Magistrate, must be obey'd, and not his under Officers ; for it cannot be imagin'd that he has intrusted any of his Delegates with a Commission to act against himself, and oblige his Subjects to break his establish'd Ordinances, any more than it can be suppos'd that the Civil Magistrate has warranted any inferior Officer in the State to compel the People to transgress the declar'd Laws of their Country : And therefore should the Prince enjoin any Thing contrary to the Divine Precepts, he manifestly exceeds the Bounds of his deputed Power, and usurps an Authority to which he has not the least claim ; and for this Reason it is an evident Dictate of natural Light, that the Subject has an undoubted Right to exercise a Judgment

of private Discretion : When he receives the Commands of the Magistrate, it is his Duty to consider, whether they contradict any previous Command of the supream Ruler, because he is as much oblig'd not to yield Obedience to Commands which are contrary to those of the Divine Being, as he is to submit to them, if the Matter of them is not forbidden by Him : And since the Subject is not bound to obey without Reserve, but on the contrary, must in some Cases refuse Obedience ; how is it possible that this can be done if he is not allow'd to reflect, examine, and judge whether the Injunctions of the Magistrate are repugnant or agreeable to the Divine Laws ? It an inferior Officer in any human Government, should issue out Orders to those under his Jurisdiction, that contradict the known Statutes of the Land ; must not the Subject refuse Obedience ? If so, he must be allow'd a Judgment of Discretion to weigh, compare, and determine whether they are opposite or suitable to the establish'd Laws of the Chief Magistrate.

In like manner if a Potentate, who is a dependant and subordinate Officer in the Monarchy of the World, in which the Divine Being is supream, should enjoin any Thing forbidden, or forbid any Thing enjoin'd by the Sovereign of Mankind, are not the Subjects oblig'd to disobey ? And if they are, must they not exercise their private Reason in the Case, and consider whether the Commands of Potentates oppose any Divine antecedent Precept ? It is therefore a natural Dictate of Reason, or a Moral Law, that Subjects should deliberate and judge whether the Commands of their Rulers are conformable to the Divine Ordinances, that is, whether the Magistrate exercises his Legislative Power about such Actions as are not already settled and determin'd by Divine Precepts or Prohibitions.

If the Question should be ask'd, whether in those Things where we are left at Liberty by the supream Governor, that is, where we are not restrain'd by any Divine Prohibition or Command, the Civil Magistrate has Power to oblige his Subjects to Obedience ? I answer, that the Magistrate in Things indifferent and undetermin'd by any particular positive Law of God, is by the general Law of Nature

ture confin'd and bound to command nothing but what is conducive to the Ends of Government. The merciful and indulgent Lawgiver of Mankind cannot be suppos'd to have constituted Vice-roys and Deputies to rule any particular Provinces or Cities within his Dominions, for other Purposes than to carry on his Design in Creation, which is his own Honour and the Felicity of his Subjects ; and all human Subaltern Officers under the supreme Moderator of the Univerſie, are oblig'd to make ſuch Laws only as are conducive to this End ; they are bound to deliberate and chuſe out of a great Variety the fitteſt Means for the Ends of Government, and their Duty is to reject what is inſignificant, and much more what is inconvenient or hurtful. When the Rulers have found out what is uſeful and proper to be the Matter of a Law, the general Precept of Nature becomes particular, and obliges them to enact it by their Authority, as much as if it had been expreſſly commanded. But if from Error of Judgment, Negligence, or an ill Principle, they iſſue forth ſuch Commands as are uſeleſs or prejudicial, and much more it deſtructive of the Ends of Civil Society, it is impoſſible that theſe Commands, which exceed the Bounds of their Commiſſion, ſhould operate by any binding Virtue. They are indeed the Commands of a publick Magiſtrate, but one acting without Warrant, and beyond his delegated Power ; and ſo not being enliyen'd and inform'd by legal Authority, they have no more force of themſelves than the Precepts of private Perſons : And were there no other Law of Nature ſupervening to determine the Subject to ſubmit, he is, as to the illegal Orders of the Magiſtrate, at his Liberty to obey or reſuſe Obedience ; for where there is no Authority to command, no Obedience can be due. But where the Magiſtrate ſhall enjoin Things only impertinent or hurtful, but not in a degree that threatens Ruin to the Conſtitution, then the Law of Reaſon that directs us to preſerve Peace and Union in Civil Societies, and to bear a leſs Suffering for the preventing of a greater, and always to decline that which will bring more Evil than Good, will oblige us to Submiſſion.

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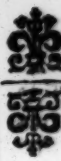
The Subject therefore for the publick Good and Tranquility must bear Hardships with Patience; and acquiesce in Male-Administration, unless the Constitution of the Community, and the universal Welfare of the People are expos'd to apparent Danger. But in Case the Civil Magistrate shall, in a notorious degree, violate his solemn Compact, by which he consented to be restrain'd and limited in the Execution of his Power; If he breaks in upon the Rights and Liberties of the People by violent Encroachments, and strikes the essential Foundations of the State, the Subject then is no longer oblig'd to submit, because now his Patience and Compliance will be more hurtful than beneficial, and will evidently contribute to the Destruction of the Community, which he is bound to preserve and not betray. And even in Absolute and Despotick Monarchies, tho the Sovereign is not restrain'd or check'd by any Contract or Stipulation with the People, yet is he under the Limitations prescrib'd by the Law of Nature, which are altogether as obligatory, not to exercise his Authority for the Detriment and Ruin, but for the Good and Benefit of the Society. And where his Commands apparently contradict the Ends of Government, and so are repugnant to the Dictates of Reason and the natural Law of God, they are only Commands, that is, they have only the Matter, but wanting Authority, they have not the essential Form that constitutes a Law. And therefore the most zealous and ablest Defenders of Monarchical Government (*Grotius, Barclay, &c.*) readily concede thus much, That it is lawful to disobey Princes, when they rage against their Subjects and destroy them with Violence and barbarous Cruelty; and if in such Cases Potentates meet with Resistance from their Subjects, those Subjects are justify'd to make such Opposition by their Right of Self-Defence and mutual Preservation, establish'd and supported by the Law of Nature.

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U P O N T H E
I M M O R T A L I T Y
O F T H E
S O U L.

B Y
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THIS Mortal Life in its full Bloom and Vigor, is so precarious, and in its utmost Extent so short and transient, that in the Opinion of Men of Prudence and Reflection, it mightily abates the Value of the most desirable Enjoyments of this World; and it is just Matter of Astonishment, that since all Men have a perfect Assurance, that their State of Existence here is so uncertain, and flies away with such Rapidity, that the present Satisfaction and Delights, which they must leave so soon; and for ever, should not fall under greater and more universal Contempt.

THE longest Life is a fugitive and inconsiderable Duration; but if we abstract from it those Parts, in which we have but a naked, or undelightful, or miserable Being, and therefore not to be valu'd, upon such a Calculation, how great must the Discompt be?

If we do not reckon the Life of Man to begin till he is in Possession of himself, and can exercise the Faculties and Powers peculiar to his Species, we must not only cut off the Stage of Infancy and Childhood from it, but likewise that of old Age, which for the greatest part is only the flat Leavings of Life, decay'd and drawn off to the Lees; when, tho the Animal survives, the Man does scarcely exist. And yet by how many other ways is our short Time contracted? Acute Pains, languishing Sickness, and wasting Labour, besides tormenting Envy and anxious Care, uneasy Malice, and exquisite Grief, the violent Perturbations and Tempests of the Soul, arising from a thousand various Causes, —by the numerous Gaps and Breaks which they make in Life, reduce its Duration to very scanty Limits. Add to these Rests and Interruptions, the necessary Returns of Sleep, which suspends the Exercise of our intellectual and sensitive Faculties, and it will appear, that all together they defraud us of two Thirds of our Time: If these Allowances are made, and the Accompt is justly stated, what a mean Ballance will remain, as the Claim of Life, it taken in the View before describ'd.

SO short is the Extent of our present Existence, if consider'd in an absolute Sense; but how momentary will it seem when compar'd with Ages that never end? What is this Span of Life, when we reflect upon interminable Duration? What is Time but a little Rill, or Drop, compar'd with the boundless Ocean of Eternity.

AS this Terrestrial Globe is reduc'd to a despicable Spot, when we contemplate the immense Body of the Sun; and as the Sun it self looses his Magnitude, and is no more than a glowing Atom, when we consider the amazing Circumference of the Universe; so the whole System of the Universe is contracted to the minutest Size, if set in competition with the Gulphs of Space that lie beyond it, and the unlimited Heights

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and Depths, and still increasing Lengths and Breadths of vast Immensity. In like manner should the Life of Man continue many Ages, even as long as the Sun and Moon endure; yet when measur'd with Immortality, it would shrink to an unextended Point. What is Man but the Tenant of a Mould of Clay, endow'd indeed with Angelick Faculties, but a perishing Wight and an Insect in Duration? What is this intelligent Creature, who thus dissolves like the Morning Cloud, and as the Evening Dew vanishes away? And what is Life, but a tender Flower that unfolds its Beauty and dies in its Bloom, an empty Vapour of the Air, that as soon as kindled, glances by our Sight, and expires in a sudden Flash? So short is the Continuance of Man in this mortal State, if compared with endless Duration.

IT must therefore be a Matter of the highest Importance to make Enquiry, whether by Death the Life of Man is totally extinguished, and the Body complicated with the common Mass of Matter, never again to be collected and reunited; or whether it will be continu'd in different Circumstances, and another Mode of Existence; and tho the Frame of the Body be ruin'd, and its Parts dissipated and blended with the common Mass of Matter, whether that which we call the Soul or the Mind, shall survive in a separate State, and never know Corruption.

IF the Soul is dissolv'd, and perishes with the Body, and no future Existence is to be expected, then the Foundation of all Religion and Obligation to Moral Duties, if they are not destroy'd, will be render'd insignificant and ineffectual; for no Temporal Considerations will restrain degenerate Mankind from following their vicious Inclinations, as if they had an unlimited and arbitrary Power over their Actions. But on the contrary, if it be establish'd by convincing Evidence, that the Soul is Immortal, and out-lives Death in a State of Separation from the Body, this will naturally

turally lead a prudent and considerate Man to bespeak himself in this manner : Since after this Body is buried in the Grave, I shall still remain in Being, nor will my Existence be discontinued in any Period of Duration, it is of the highest Concern to know, whether I shall be Happy or Miserable in that Everlasting State. I am a Creature and a Subject of the Supreme Ruler of the World, and by the rational Faculties with which I am endow'd, I can easily discern there are many natural Laws and moral Duties which I am bound to obey ; and that therefore I am an accountable Being, and shall be rewarded or punish'd, according to my Observance or Contempt of those Divine Precepts and Rules of Life ; and how terrible will be the Sentence, should I be condemn'd to endless Sufferings and Despair ? Would not that Man be look'd on as incapable of Reflection and deserted of common Sense, who should chuse, for the sake of one Hour's Pleasure, to endure unremitting Torment and Anguish of Heart, during the whole remainder of his Life ? But how infinitely greater an Instance of Folly and Distraction is it, for the sake of the short-liv'd Enjoyments here, to draw upon one's self Divine Displeasure and endless Misery hereafter ?

THIS Point then of the Soul's Immortality being of such great Consequence, it is no wonder that it has exercis'd so many excellent Pens, as well in the Pagan as the Christian World. *Plato, Plutarch, Avicenne,* and *Nemesius*, are celebrated Authors on this Subject ; and since the Evangelical Revelation has brought Life and Immortality to Light, many have writ with great Strength of Reason on this Article of our Belief, but none with so much Force and Perspicuity, as some late Writers of our own Nation.

BUT since so great and important a Doctrine cannot be too much illustrated and confirmed; especially when we reflect on the present prevailing Power of Impiety, which maintains its ground against the most

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vigorous Assaults of Reason, spreads its Contagion, and makes Profelites in defiance of the Religion and the Laws of the Kingdom, I have thought it useful and seasonable to publish this ESSAY, in which I have endeavoured to add some new Arguments, and to give greater Force and Clearness to those that have been already urg'd by others, to Support the Belief of the Soul's Immortality, by casting them in another Form that may heighten the Evidence of the Demonstration. The great Spring, whence the deplorable Decay of Piety, and the universal Corruption of Manners that threaten this Nation with Ruin, are derived, is the disbelief of a Future State of Life, or a Fluctuation of Mind about its certainty, or an indolent Inattendant to it. Nor can the Virtue of this Nation, which must be allowed to our great Dishonour, as well as Danger, to be in a very languishing Condition, if not at the last Gasps, be recovered to a vigorous and healthful State, till a warmer and more general Belief of a Future Life of Happiness or Misery, shall take Possession of our Minds, determine the Choice of our Ends, and govern the Course of our Actions; for without the Motives drawn from the Certainty of the Rewards that attend the Practice of Vertue, and the Punishments decreed to Irreligion and Vice in the next State of Life, powerfully applyed to our Hopes and Fears, the Strength and Support of Piety and Moral Goodness fall to the Ground.

THAT the Passions are the Blemish and Disgrace of Human Nature, the Distemper and Diseases of the Mind, and therefore entirely to be subdued and eradicated, was the absurd and extravagant Opinion of the *Stoick* Philosophers. Hence they infer'd, that Hopes and Fears were not only unnecessary, but inconvenient and hurtful; and therefore should not be the Springs and Principles of our Actions. That we should not be deter'd from Vice and Immorality by the Apprehensions of consequent Shame and Punishment,

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nor pursue any good and generous Design from the expectation of a Future Reward ; but in short, that Vertue should be esteem'd and embrac'd for its native Beauty and intrinsick Perfection. In conformity to this erroneous Sentiment they endcavoured, tho with fruitless Labour, wholly to extinguish the natural Emotions of the Soul, and pretended to court Vertue under no Views of Advantage, but for its own inherent Excellence.

ABOUT two hundred Years before the Incarnation, one *Sador*, a Disciple of *Simon the Just*, and the Founder of the *Sadducees*, the first Sect among the *Jews*, profess'd and propagated the same Doctrine ; tho some affirm, that he only asserted, that if indeed there were no Future State of Retribution, yet an innocent and pious Life ought to be pursued as good and delightful in it self, and Vice to be resisted and avoided as ignominious and detestable from its own intrinsick Turpitude ; upon which his unwary Scholars mistaking their Master, as if he had taught that no Future Recompence was to be expected, took up this Doctrine, and maintained it against the *Pharisees*.

TO excite a Man to the Esteem and Love of Vertue, by the sole Representation of its excellent and amiable Properties, abstracting from all Prospects of present or future Recompence, at first sight seems to heighten its Idea, and makes us believe, that those who thus adhere to it, act from a more generous and sublime Principle, than they who court her under mercenary Views, and are more in love with her Fortune than her Beauty.

BUT if this be examined it will soon appear, that by thus refining and exalting the Notion of Vertue, they have destroyed its Force, and dismiss'd its Followers: For tho' it is true, that setting aside the Consideration, that Vertue and Religion expose Men to the Loss of Liberty, Estates, and Life it self, during the Violence and Persecution of cruel Tyrants, the

Dictates

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Dictates of Reason would determine us to the Choice of a just and religious Life; yet if we reflect on the innate Depravity and corrupt Habits inherent in the Minds of Men by which they are powerfully swayed to gratify their Passions and inordinate Appetites, it must be allowed, they will not be attracted by the naked Charms of Vertue, nor affrighted by the meer Deformity of Vice from their criminal Enjoyments. We find, by constant Experience, that all the Arguments drawn from the amiable Nature of Vertue, and the temporal Advantages that arise from the Practice of it, tho' back'd and enforced by the Encouragements and certain Expectations of endless Felicity hereafter, engaged but few, if compar'd with the Race of Mankind, heartily to espouse her Cause; how then can we expect she should have any Votaries, if she had nothing to bestow upon them but her self, and what she confers in this Life? Hence the *Stoicks* and *Sadduces*, that persuade Men to be vertuous, abstracting from Hopes of Reward, or Fear of Punishment, lay the Ax to the Root of Piety, and exterminate moral Goodness from the World.

I SHALL now Attempt to give such Proofs of the Immortality of the Soul, as will leave in the Mind no reasonable ground of doubting.

The IMMORTALITY *of the* SOUL *demonstrated by natural Arguments.*

AS at the command of the Omnipotent Creator, to whom to Will and Execute is the same, all the Beings that compose and adorn the Frame of Nature, started out of Nothing and stepped up into Existence; so the Conversation, which is a prolong'd Creation of those Beings, is owing to a constant Communication of Power from this exhaustless Source of Energy and Motion. Should he no longer Will its Continuance, but suspend his preserving Influence, the whole Creation
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would immediately dissolve and disappear. Streams may sooner renounce their dependence on their Fountains, and Light subsist without fresh Emanations from the Sun, than the most excellent and perfect Creatures can remain one Minute independant on their Maker.

AND since the Author is a free and arbitrary Agent, the Duration and Futurity of Being must absolutely rely on his Pleasure; and we are no farther capable of knowing whether any of his Creatures shall have the Privilege of Everlasting Existence, than he either by the Light of Reason or Revelation has signify'd his Will concerning it.

TO know then if the Soul of Man shall for ever exist, it is necessary to enquire, whether the Divine Author has made any Declaration of his Will always to uphold its Being; and setting aside Revelation, I shall attempt to show by the natural Dictates of Reason, that he has made known his Pleasure, that Human Souls shall always continue.

HE has signify'd this Intention, by framing the Soul of a Substance, not obnoxious to Corruption or Dissolution: Artificers express by the Nature, Properties, and Capacities, which they give to their Works, what those Works are designed for; and by the Frame, Springs, and Movements communicated to their *Automata*, they shew how long they intend their Motion shall endure. Thus by making the Soul of a Substance, that is not Matter, nor liable to Waste or Disunion, the Author has declared that he designed it for an unlimited Duration.

THAT the Soul is incorporeal will be the sooner granted, if an immaterial Substance be not thought to imply a Contradiction, and none but the Atheist, with whom I am not at present concerned, will maintain that Assertion, for all others acknowledge a Divine omnipotent Mind not compounded of material Parts, and therefore the Notion of an incorporeal Substance cannot be repugnant to Reason, nor rejected by any but the profess'd Patrons of Impiety.

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THE Soul is discovered to be Immaterial by its Operations. That Sensation, as Atomists assert, can be the Effect of the Organ from its Renitence or Elastick Spring, by which it strives to free it self from the material Object that strikes upon it, is an inexplicable Explanation of sensitive Perception; for Instance, When the Corporeal Image, says *Mr. Hobbes*, enters into the Organ of the Eye, the nervous Fibres implanted there to resist its Progress, spring back against it, and from that Effort Vision results.

NOW let any Man try if he can conceive how the Impulse of one material Thing and the Resistance and Reaction of another can produce Sensation; we must solve this Difficulty our selves, for the Philosopher does not pretend to inform us. But entirely to subvert this Hypothesis, it is evident that Preception is not perform'd in the Organ, but in the Head, since it often happens that Men are entirely depriv'd of Sight, tho the Eye has no defect, and the visible Image has free admittance there, as oft as the Optick Nerve is so obstructed, as not to suffer the Spirits acted upon by the Object to propagate their Motion, and carry the Impulse from the Eye to the Brain.

IT is yet harder to conceive, how meer Matter by its own Power, can recoil upon it self, contemplate its own Nature, Reason and Philosophize upon its own Properties and review its own Actions: How, in Argumentation, it can assent to two Propositions, between which it discerns an Agreement, and by quite another Motion deduce from them a Third. That Matter should be able to begin its own Motion, to stop or change it to another at Pleasure, as it must do in Contemplation and Reasoning, is to ascribe Powers to Matter, which are acknowledg'd inconsistent with all the Properties observ'd in corporeal Beings. The Formation of Ideas in the Brain by Imagination, the ranging and Disposition of them by the Judgment into regular Schemes and Trains of Thought, must be allow'd the Effect of an Immaterial Principle.

Principle. If meer Matter could, by its peculiar Figuration, Purity, and Motion, be rais'd to the Dignity of a Thinking Substance, suppose, since Matter is divisible, that when it has form'd a Thought, it should be separated into Parts, the Consequence would be, that each Part must retain its Portion of the Character or Idea; and thus you might divide a Thought into Halves, Quarters, or yet minuter Portions, which sounds a little odd in the Mouth of a Philosopher.

NOR is it possible to account for Memory any more than for Reflection, Calculation, and Reasoning from mere Matter and Motion; as for many other Reasons, so for this, That Matter being in continual Flux, and therefore the Limbs of our Bodies and the Organs of our Senses being not the same now as they were some Years ago, the old Materials perpetually fleeing from the Body, and new ones succeeding in their Place; the Particles of Matter being lost that formed our Spirits seven Years ago, and were endow'd and stamp'd with the Characters produc'd at that Time, must have carry'd away those Impressions with them, and the new Matter that came in the room of the former being naked and unfigur'd with those Ideas, could not possibly preserve the Memory of past Transactions. If a Ship, on which are carv'd, for Ornament, various Figures and Signs, should stay at Sea till every Plank and Piece of Wood, by degrees, were gone, and their Places supply'd by fresh Timber, as it is reported of *Drakes Vessel*, would this Ship retain those Images and Ornaments which it carry'd out?

NOR is the Self determining Power or free Choice, which the Soul enjoys a less convincing Evidence of its immaterial Nature, than its Reflection, Argumentation and Memory. This Capacity of designing an End, of deliberating and ballancing about the Finess of the Means to attain it; and at last, upon the Comparison of chusing one in preference to the rest, is so plain a Discovery that the Soul is not Corporeal, that the Oppo-

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fers of its immaterial Nature acknowledge this to be the most difficult of all the Powers of the Mind to be accounted for upon their Hypothesis: and it is indeed so difficult, that in their Attempt to explain it, they are driven to the most extravagant Absurdities. Can any thing be more inconsistent and ridiculous than the Invention of *Lucretius*, who to solve this Difficulty, supposes against the Foundation of the *Epicurean* Scheme of Philosophy, a declining Motion of his Atomes; that is, neither strait nor oblique, but *quasi* oblique. But I shall not pursue this Subject here, having fully expos'd that idle and incoherent Hopothesis in another *Writing*. *creation*

IF the Soul were a System compounded of refin'd and Figur'd Matter, agitated by a rapid Motion, it would surmount the reach of Human Understanding to imagine how it should so far transcend the Sphere of its own Activity, as to have any Notion of immaterial Substance; that it should doubt of its being Corporeal, dispute against its own Nature, suspect its own Properties, and grow ambitious of being rang'd among superior Creatures, even those of angelick Endowments and immortal Duration. Yet this is the Case before us; if the Mind of Man is made of Matter, it is, I say, unaccountable whence it should be capable of forming the Idea of an intellectual Spirit, and how it came to be universally prejudic'd against the right Conception of its own Nature, and prepossess'd with the contrary erroneous Opinion.

ANOTHER Argument of the Soul's Immaterial, and therefore Immortal Nature is this; that it enjoys Pleasures and Satisfaction peculiar to the Capacities and Taste of a spiritual, intelligent Being; of this Nature is the Delight that a Philosopher perceives in contemplating the beautiful System of the World, in searching the hidden Springs and Causes of Things, and tracing Nature through the Varieties of her secret and admirable Operations; of this sort likewise is the Pleasure of a Mathematician, taken up in the Pursuits of Knowledge by an infinite Series of coherent Deductions and

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Demonstrations. Nor is the Poet's Delight of a different Kind, that arises from the Operations of a spiritual, fertile, and vast Imagination. These Pleasures, that are plainly Intellectual, are so much superior to those of Sense, that sometimes they transport Men out of themselves, and so far suspend their Relish and Desire of sensitive Enjoyments, that they forget to refresh themselves with Meat, Drink, and Sleep. Yet the Satisfaction and Complacency of a religious Mind, flowing from Acts of Piety and Devotion, from the ardent Efforts of Divine Love, Gratitude, Joy, and Admiration, from the Contemplation of the infinite Perfections of the Supreme Being, and the Foretaste and Preoccupation of Future Felicity, are yet of a more excellent and exalted Nature: These are refin'd, elevated, and spiritual Joys, of which the Animal Nature is entirely incapable. Nor are these the Delights of Men of an odd and whimsical Complexion, but of Persons of severe Judgment, clear Heads, strong Reason, and inur'd to the closest manner of arguing; Men unbiass'd and disinterested, and as much deliver'd from a superstitious Turn of Mind, melancholy Delusions, and splenetick Dreams, as their Opponents are from the Impressions of Religion, and the Prejudices of Education. But if the contrary were true, that the Divine Pleasures that arise from the Exercise of pious Habits were imaginary and groundless, yet still the Argument holds good, that they are of a peculiar Kind, proper to the Soul, and distinct from those sensitive Satisfactions that only affect corporeal Organs. A Man of Reflection will easily acknowledge they are above the Sphere of Sense, and of so pure celestial, and sublime a Nature, as to be adapted only to spiritual Beings. And hence it will appear, that there is the very same Reason to conclude that the Soul of Man is Incorporeal, and therefore an incorruptable Substance; as that any created Being is so, whose Immaterial and Immortal Nature cannot be infer'd from any other Principles than those, which will

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as well demonstrate the same Properties in the Soul of Man.

THE Happiness then which the Soul enjoys peculiar to its Faculties, and distinct from the Pleasures of the Body which it inhabits, will facilitate to Men of Reason the Belief of its Immortality. Brute Creatures, not being made for endless Duration, have no Taste or Desire of the Felicity of an intelligent Mind, which arises from the Acquisition of Knowledge and Wisdom, the Practice of Vertue, and the sweet Reflection on a useful and innocent Life: For this Happiness is proper to the Soul, which it is evident it may possess in a State of Separation; for the Animal Part of Man has no more Relish or Perception of these superior intellectual Delights, than the same low nature has in the Beasts that perish.

AND if the Soul is capable of this Felicity and Perfection, and has Pleasures peculiar to its own Nature, and is capable of enjoying them when disunited from the Body; and if the Creator of the World did not endow it with that Capacity in vain, it should not, methinks, be difficult to discern, that therefore he design'd it for happy Immortality.

NOR is the Argument less conclusive for the Soul's Immortality, when we urge, that it is capable of Pain and Misery appropriated to it self. It can discern the Deformity and moral Turpitude of its Actions, and reflect on Guilt with Shame and Remorse; it is startled and terrify'd at the Apprehensions of Divine Displeasure, can anticipate the awful Solemnity of the day of Accompt, and to avoid an endless miserable Existence, can desire to go out of Being, and wish for Annihilation. These Operations are so far above the Capacity, of the Animal Nature, that one would think they should convince any Man, that the Soul is Spiritual and Immaterial, and therefore framed for endless Duration: For he may be as well satisfyed from what has been alledg'd, that the Animal Part of Man is as uncapable of that intellectual Happiness

Happiness or Misery which has been describ'd, as we are sure that a Tree notwithstanding its vegetable Life, cannot Feel, see, or hear, while we observe that it expresses no sensitive Perceptions, nor has any proper Organs for such Purposes.

BESIDES, let it be considered, that Mankind even in their deprav'd State, notwithstanding the Obscurity of their Thoughts and the Confusion of their Ideas, as well as their moral Corruption and Degeneracy, have universally express'd a strong Inclination to believe the two great Articles of Religion, The Existence of a God, and the Immortality of the Soul. These Notions bear such a Conformity to their Intellectual Faculties, that as soon as ever they exercis'd their Reason, and were left to the Freedom of their Thoughts, they readily assented to the Truth of them. The first of these Articles, the Existence of a God, is suppos'd to be granted in this Discourse : And as the general Consent of Mankind to the Notion of a God, is justly us'd as an Argument of great Weight against the Atheist ; so the same universal Voice of Nature is of no less Validity against the Infidel, that disbelieves the Immortality of the Soul ; for those Notions which the whole Human Species readily assent to, must be allow'd to be the Declaration and Opinion of Nature ; or in plainer words, the strongest, clearest, and most early Dictate of Reason, otherwise it will be impossible to account for the general and ready Belief of such a Notion. It must be granted, that the powerful Disposition and Bent of Mind, in all Nations and Ages, to receive this Proposition as true, That the *Soul is Immortal*, will make it evident, that it must be a natural Idea, agreeable to the Inclination, and suitable to the Frame and Faculties of the Mind. The common People, conducted only by the Biass and Light of Nature, believ'd that the Soul did not perish with the Body, but that after the Dissolution of that Tenement, it continu'd in Being, and pass'd

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pass'd into a State of Happiness or Misery, agreeable to its Behaviour in this Life.

THEIR Deifying of deceased Men, who had been eminent Benefactors to Mankind; and peopling Heaven with Colonies of Heroes, their Kingdom of *Pluto*, and the variety of Torments suppos'd to be inflicted on the Impious and Flagitious, and the Pleasures of their *Elysian* Fields, the Reward of the Just and Innocent; and in short, their whole Scheme of Theology, however superstitious and absurd, were evidently founded on this Principle of the Soul's Immortality.

THE greatest part likewise of the most eminent Philosophers held this Opinion; the Primitive *Pythagorians*, the *Platonists*, and the *Stoicks*, at least for the most part, were Assertors of it: and that this was the general Notion of their wisest Men, we have the clear Testimony of *Cicero*, who with great Care had study'd their Writings, and was admirably vers'd in the Doctrines of all their different Sects. That great Man having freely declar'd his Belief of the Soul's Immortality, says thus; *Nor has Reason only and Argumentation compell'd me to receive this Opinion, but the Judgment and Authority of the most eminent Philosophers.* And elsewhere he affirms, That this Notion of the Soul's Immortality, was supported by the Consent of all Nations. Tho *Socrates*, the most excellent of the Pagan Sages, who never roundly and positively affirm'd any thing, spoke with Diffidence and Fluctuation about a future State after his modest manner; yet his Belief, tho it did not exclude all doubting, was so prevalent, that it over-power'd and controul'd his Diffidence to such a degree, that upon the Hopes and Prospect of a happy Immortality, he laid down his Life with Alacrity and great firmness of Mind. And as in moral Habits, that degree of Vertue that is powerful enough to bear down the contrary evil Inclinations, and engage us in predominant Obedience to its Precepts, is in a Christian Sense real and sincere; so that Belief of a Future State that prevails

vails with any Man, in spite of all Opposition, to act in conformity to that Principle must be allow'd to be genuine ; and what could have been expected more from *Socrates*, to have manifested his Integrity and the victorious Degree of his Belief of the Soul's Immortality, than that which with great Courage and Constancy he express'd. But of all the learned and wise Pagans none have more openly, and in stronger Terms up and down his Writings, acknowledg'd his Belief of this Article, than *Cicero*. These are his words : (a) *The Souls of all Men are Immortal, but those of the Good and Valiant are not only Immortal, but Divine.* (b) *There is nothing sublunary, but what is mortal and perishing, except the Souls that the Gods have bestow'd on the Race of Mankind.* (c) *Death is not the Destruction of our Being, and the Extinction of all our Enjoyments, but a sort of Translation or Change of Life.*

BUT he declares his Mind upon this Subject most clearly, and in the most noble and pious Expressions, in the latter end of his excellent Book *De Senectute*, where he says, That he firmly believ'd that the famous Ro-

(a) *Omnium quidem Animi Immortalis sunt sed fortium Bonorumque divini.* *De Leg.*

(b) *Infra Lunam nihil est nisi Mortale & Caducum, præter Animos generi Hominum munere Deorum Datos.*

(c) *Mortem non interitum esse omnia tollentem atque deletentem, sed quandam migrationem & commutationem Vitæ.* *Tuscul.*

Animus seipsum movet atque idcirco non est Natus sed Æternus. *Tuscul.*

Mors his terribilis est, quorum cum Vita omnia extinguuntur. *Parad.*

Mors aut meliorem, quam qui est in Vita, aut certe non deteriorem allatura est statum. *Pro Flacc.*

Incorpore inclusus tanquam alienæ domi, propria emin ejus sedes est Cælum. *Tuscul.*

Sic habeto te non esse mortalem, sed Corpus hoc. *De Som. Scip.*

Bonorum mentes mihi Divinæ atque Æternæ videntur, & ex Hominum Vita ad Deorum Religionem Sanctimoniamque migrant. *De Leg.*

Impii apud inferos pœnas lunt. *Ibid.*

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mans, his deceas'd Friends, were still alive, and that they enjoy'd a Life which only deserv'd that Name. And afterwards he asserts, that he collected the Immortality of the Soul from its Operations and immaterial Nature. *I persuade my self*, says he, *since the Soul is endow'd with such Activity, such a Remembrance of Things past, such a Foresight of Events to come, so many Arts, Sciences, and Inventions, that a Nature, which contains in it self such Perfections, cannot be Mortal ; since the Soul is always agitated, nor has any beginning of Motion, because she moves her self ; nor will have any end of Motion, because she will never desert, or be wanting to her self ; and since the Nature of the Soul is simple, nor contains the mixture of any Thing that is unlike or incongruous to its self, it can never be divided, and therefore can never perish.*—*My Soul exerting her self, always look'd upon Futurity in this View, that when it should part with Life, it should then Live.*—*I have an ardent Desire, says he to Scipio and Lalius, to see your Fathers, whom I conquer'd and lov'd, nor do I long only to converse with those whom I knew, but with those likewise of whom I have heard and read, and of whom I my self have written.*—And a little after, transported with the Prospect of a happy Immortality, he breaks out into this triumphant and celebrated Exclamation.——*O glorious Day, when I shall be admitted into the Council and Assembly of Souls, and be deliver'd from this tumultuous and polluted World, when I shall not only meet with the great Spirits before-named, but with my lov'd Cato also, the bravest and best of Men !*—And after, *If I err in this Belief of the Immortality of the Soul, I err willingly, nor shall any thing while I live wrest this Error from me.*—What an excellent and divine Mind had this noble Roman, tho a Heathen, compar'd with the Professors of Impiety and the Christian Libertines of these degenerate Times ?

THERE remains yet another Argument to prove, that the bravest and wisest Men in all Ages thought that the Soul remain'd alive after the Dissolution of the Body, and that is, their earnest Desire of Glory and Immortal Fame. That the greatest and most generous Spirits among the Heathens, coveted above all Things Applause and a great Name is evident from their own Writings, in which they express this Passion in the warmest manner, and acknowledge, that this was the Spring and impulsive Principle from which their indefatigable Labours and worthy Undertakings had their Rise. And to the same Desire of Renown, perhaps, the far greatest part of the Productions of famous Wits and the illustrious Atchievements of Heroes among Christians owe their Birth. Cicero says, that this Passion is always found in the greatest and finest Spirits. (d) *The Minds of the best Men*, says he, *chiefly aspire after immortal Glory*. And elsewhere he says thus: (e) *There is scarce any Man, who by the Labours he undertakes, and the Dangers to which he exposes himself, does not desire Glory, as the Reward of his great Actions.*— And in another place he gives this Reason of it: (f) *The Life of Man is short, but the Course of Glory is Eternal*. In another thus: (g) *Of all the Rewards of Virtue Glory is the greatest; it is only this that can afford Consolation for the shortness of Life, by causing us to be remember'd by Posterity, that can make us Present while Absent, and preserve us alive after Death*. This universal desire of Praise and Admiration, and to

(d) Optavit cuiusque Animus maxime ad immortalem Gloriam
 regere. De Sen.

(e) Vix invenitur, qui laboribus susceptis periculisque aditis,
 non quæ Mercedem rerum Gestarum desideret Gloriam. Off.

(f) Vita brevis, cursus Gloriæ sempiternus. Pro Sest.

(g) Ex omnibus præmiis Virtutis amplissimum esse Præmium
 Gloriam, esse hanc unam, quæ brevitate Vitæ Posteritatis Me-
 moriæ consolaretur, quæ efficeret, ut adientes adessemus, mortui
 vivere nos. Pro Mil.

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be spoken of with Honour in the Ages to come, must suppose, that those who covet and pursue it, must believe as I have suggested in another Discourse, that they shall continue in Being after their Decease, or else that Passion is very idle and unaccountable ; for what Satisfaction can the Applauses and Panegyricks of Posterity afford a Man that is not in Being, and therefore entirely incapable of enjoying them ?

THUS the best and wisest Persons in all Times and Nations, have look'd on the Human Soul as incorporeal, except those of the *Epicurean* School, who with great Zeal and Labour endeavour'd to elevate their Nature to the Rank of intelligent Engines, and self-moving *Automata* ; but the Reasons they us'd were so frivolous and inconclusive, and the Explications they have given, how Matters may be dispos'd to Think, Reason, and acquire a self-determining Power and Freedom of Choice, are so inept and ridiculous, that to name them is enough to confirm the Reader in the contrary Opinion. Let any Man consider how these little Philosophers solve the Operations of the Mind upon the foot of mere Matter and Motion, and I assure my self, he will reject their Notions with Contempt.

IF then the Body of the common People, and the far greatest part of the wisest and most learned Men in all Ages, have declared their Belief of the Soul's Immortality ; this will amount to the universal Approbation of Mankind, notwithstanding some Individuals have express'd their Dissent ; of which more in the next Argument. And this is so agreeable to *Cicero's* Sentiment, that notwithstanding he had acknowledg'd that *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, *Dichæarchus*, and others affirm'd, that the Soul was Corporeal and Mortal, yet he declares his Sense thus : (h) *It is my Judgment that the Soul is Immortal, by the Consent of all Nations.*

(h) *Animos permanere arbitramur consensu omnium Nationum.*
Tuscul.

THE no less universal Desire of Immortality which is found among Mankind, if well attended to, should induce us to receive this Article; for if this Desire be universal, it must be an Instinct of Nature; and if so, must be implanted in the Mind, like other inbred Propensions and Appetites, by the Author of Nature, who, I imagine, no one will believe mixt in the Constitution of Man any Desires, Faculties or Appetites, for which he had provided no suitable Objects; for this would be to suppose, that either infinite Wisdom acted without an End, or that infinite Goodness designed a Delusion; of which more when we come to MORAL ARGUMENTS. Now that the Desire of Immortality is as really universal as other natural Appetites, will appear thus.

THAT Impulse or Propension must be allowed to be Natural, which is felt by all Nations in all Ages, and especially by those whose Nature is most perfect, and whose Faculties are most refined and improved, which is the Case before us. All People tho most remote from each other, and most different in their Language, Customs and Inclinations, agree in their Desires and Expectations of Immortality, and feel something of a secret Assurance, that their Lives will not be extinguish'd by the Dissolution of the Body, but only change its State and Circumstances. And it is not only Death, of which by the strong Principle of Self-preservation they express an Abhorrence, but the Soul shrinks and starts back on her self at the Thoughts of Annihilation; and this Instinct is so general, that it must be concluded it was originally interwoven with our native Complexion.

IT will be in vain to contend, that the Desire of Living alway is not universal, and therefore not a natural Impulse, because several Persons are so far from wishing an immortal State, that they decline it, and dread nothing more. Let this be granted, yet it does by no means overturn my Position; for the Idea of Universality, in this Case, does not include the Desires of every

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Individual, but the ordinary Temper of Mankind, and the Instincts of infinitely the greatest Number of Persons, for that is said to be natural, which in the customary Series of Nature's Operations generally is produc'd, the sometimes she may deviate from her common Path, and surprize us with irregular and extraordinary Productions. Deprivation of Sight and incapacity of Hearing or Speaking, which some owe to their first Formation in the Womb, will be no convincing Argument, that Seeing, Hearing, and Speech are not natural to the Human Species. Nor is it a Demonstration that the Shape, Number, and Connexion of Members, which are commonly observ'd in Man, is not the natural Order requir'd in his Structure, should it be alledg'd, that in some this Symetry is neglected, that the *Fetus* comes into the World rumpled and misshapen, with more or fewer Limbs than usual, and in its Growth still keeps its monstrous Figure and Deformity. Besides, it must be considered that those few Persons, in comparison, who instead of desiring, would avoid Immortality, are generally such, whose evil Habits and vicious Manners make them obnoxious to the dreadful Apprehensions of Divine Punishments in another Life; and therefore they tremble at the Thoughts of a Future State of Existence. In this Case these Men act agreeably to Reason, while they chuse rather to perish, to be dissipated and mingle with common Matter, and to go quite out of Being, than to live in Pain and endless Misery. And when by their immoral Behaviour they have made it necessary to their Safety, that their Souls should perish with their Bodies, by degrees they bring over their struggling Reason to the side of their Interest, and deny, or pretend to disbelieve the Soul's Immortality. And this will account for a surprizing Event; that is, why among Nations, whose Faculties are more cultivated and enlighten'd by the Christian Religion, the Disbelief of the Soul's Immortality should be more rife and prevalent than among ancient and modern Pagans. For these
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not being so certain of incurring, by their evil Actions, Divine Displeasure and suffering Future Misery, did not lie under so strong a Temptation to reject the Opinion of a Future State, as a loose and vicious Christian, who being instructed in the Conditions of Happiness hereafter, is assur'd, that his dissolute Life is inconsistent with those Conditions ; and therefore if after Death there is an everlasting State, he must expect to be for ever miserable.

AND this Assertion is supported by the following Observation. Men that have been bred in loose and ignorant Families, not being thoroughly made acquainted with the Nature of Vertue, and the necessary Terms of Future Felicity, seldom become so impious in Principle as to renounce the Belief of a Deity and a Future State ; for these can make their disorderly Life, and the Hopes of a happy Immortality, agree well enough together, not knowing that they are really repugnant and never to be reconcil'd ; while those who have had the Advantages of liberal and vertuous Educations, and are convinced of the Necessity of a regular and sober Life to the attainment of Immortal Bliss, and the avoiding of endless Sufferings ; while these, I say, who are endowed with a good Share of religious Knowledge, which however is unoperative in their Lives, being overpowered by the Violence of evil Habits and vicious Inclinations, are very sensible, that by their irregular Actions they become obnoxious to Divine Displeasure, whence they are constantly disturb'd in their guilty Enjoyments by secret Terror and Remorse, it is no wonder that they use the most effectual means in their Power, to remove the perpetual Anguish and Disquiet of their Minds ; and since they labour under a moral Impotency, and are not able to restrain their inordinate Appetites, what can they do, but attempt to efface the Notion of a Future State of Immortality, that they may pursue their dissolute Course of Life without troublesome Reflections, and keep their Breasts from being a

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miserable Seat of War, between their immoral Habits and the Dictates of Vertue? This is the Reason, why those, who in their Youth have been well instructed in the Principles of Religion, and bred among great Examples of Piety and Vertue, and of which themselves once express'd some Taste and Esteem, if they afterwards become Libertines, are more inclin'd than others to renounce the Belief of a Future Immortality.

IF then the Soul be an immaterial Substance, and more than a dissipable System or curious Web of attenuated Matter, it discovers the Will of the Author, that he designed it for immortal Duration.

Of MORAL ARGUMENTS.

THE Belief of the Existence of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, are Articles of Religion so closely connected, that he who acknowledges the first will soon be induced to embrace the last: For from the infinite Perfections of the Divine Being, namely, his Goodness, Wisdom, Justice and Faithfulness, the eternal Life of the Mind is so evidently infer'd, that it scarce needs any other Demonstration.

IN the first place I will attempt to deduce this Conclusion from his infinite Goodness. All who acknowledge a supream Being, the Maker and Moderator of the World, conceive him as endow'd with unlimited Power; and that therefore he is able to produce all Things, the Notion of which does not contain any inconsistent Ideas that destroy each other, that is, which does not imply a Contradiction: for such repugnant Things are justly allow'd to be out of the Sphere of Omnipotent Activity. It must then be granted, that an Almighty Cause has Ability to create an immaterial and incorruptible Mind like himself, who is an Incorporeal and Spiritual Being, since that Conception does not include contradictory Terms. Infinite Power and unlimited Fruitfulness can, with the same Ease, make a Seraph

raph as a Worm : nor can an incorporeal Substance, yet unproduc'd, any more disobey the creating Word, or delay to put on Being and step forth into Existence, than a Pebble or an Insect. This being premis'd, it will follow, that if we have a just Conception of the Divine Goodness, we may thence deduce the Immortality of the Soul.

GOODNESS is a generous Disposition of Mind, to diffuse and communicate it self, to others, in proportion to the Agent's Ability, and the Receiver's Capacity. This Notion is so just, that tho a Man should possess an Affluence of all Things requir'd for the Gratification of his Senses and the Endowments of his Mind, yet his Felicity would be incompleat, were he without an Ability of being Beneficial to others ; no excellent and exalted Spirit can be easy, tho he enjoys whatever his Desires demand for himself unless he is capable of supplying the Wants of those about him ; nor will he esteem himself happy, while it is out of his Power to make others so.

THIS Idea of Goodness strikes us with such Pleasure and Admiration, that we presently ascribe it in the highest Degree to the great Creator, and adore him as the Best and most Beneficent Being. And therefore the Philosopher said well, That those Men were most like the Gods, who wanted least for themselves, and did most Good to others. The Supream Being then, who is endowed with all possible Perfection, and therefore possesses this Attribute of Goodness in its utmost Extent, must have boundless Propensions to communicate it self, and impart Felicity to others. And since he has brought into Existence Corporeal Creatures of an inferior Rank and of different Degrees of Perfection, and has diffus'd one common Nature with amazing Variety, through innumerable Kinds of Insects and superior Animals, in a beautiful Subordination to each other, it is not to be imagin'd, why his Fertility should stop here, and not proceed to form more excellent Beings ;

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we may then safely conclude, that since he is able, his infinite Desire of communicating his Goodness has actually inclin'd him to create Substances of an immaterial Nature, and of a higher Order than his visible Productions; such are the various Ranks or Classes of Spirits, dignified with Reason and Freedom of Choice. This therefore amounts to a Demonstration, that God has made Creatures of a more excellent Nature than those compounded of Matter; and that such as are distinguished by the Faculty of Reason, Judgment, and Self-determining Power, must be concluded to be these immaterial Beings, on whom the Author, who envies no Happiness of his Creatures, has bestow'd such high Endowments.

AND when we contemplate the infinite Wisdom of the first Cause, the beautiful Method and Order that he has observed in the various Productions of his Power, it will appear very reasonable that he should have made such a compound Being as Man, in whom the spiritual and Angelick Nature is vitally blended and combin'd with that of a Corporeal Animal. This, I say, is reasonable to believe, if we observe the Subordination of the different Kinds of his Creatures, and the gradual Ascent from the lowest to the highest, contriv'd with such Admirable Art, that it is difficult to assign the Limits where one Species ends, and another begins. Some rais'd above inanimate Things possess only a vegetable Life. The next Order are Insects, whereof some besides a Principle of Motion, have a low sensitive Perception, imperfect organical Frames, and are of short continuance. Others have more Sensation more perfect Bodies, and a greater Principle of Local Motion, but in various Degrees, and of various Duration. The Class above this is that of brute Animals, which have sensitive Perception, Appetities, and Local Motion in a Superior manner, but destitute of Choice and Reason: It now from this Rank of irrational Animals, we should step immediately into the superior World of Angels and

immaterial Spirits, would there not appear a great Chasm and want of that Subordination and Connexion, which the wise Creator has manifestly observ'd in the gradual Ascent, from the inferior to the higher Ranks of his Creatures? And is it not congruous and suitable to his Steps and Progress in Creation, and very becoming his Divine Wisdom, that before we go from Beasts to Angels, that Gap should be fill'd up, and the ordinary Gradation be maintain'd by a Species of Creatures, that are partly one and partly the other, that is, Mankind, who by their participation of both Natures, beautifully preserve the Connexion between the Animal and the Spiritual Angelick World? If then the supream Cause is able and willing to produce an immaterial Mind; and if it becomes his Wisdom, and is agreeable to his Providence and the Rule and Manner of his acting, to embody such a Mind in a corporeal Frame, one may safely conclude that his Creature Man is such a Production.

A N O T H E R Moral Argument for a Future State, may be deduc'd from the joint Comtemplation of the Divine Goodness.

T H E Author of this wide and magnificent Theatre of the World, did not act by a Necessity of Nature, in producing his wonderful Works, otherwise he must always have exerted his utmost Energy and Art, and had given Existence to no Creatures but those of the highest Perfection, who approach'd nearest to his own Divine Nature; but he has shewn himself a free and arbitrary Agent, by creating Beings of infinite Variety; all which, tho' distinguish'd by different Degrees of Excellence, are perfect in their Kind, and by their Connexion and regular Subordination to each other, conspire to produce the Symetry, Beauty, and Harmony of the whole. And tho' sometimes there appear Deviations and Errors in the Production of sublunary Beings, which are call'd the Sport or Play of Nature diverted from her first Intention; yet this happens but to a few Individuals, while the Kind is preserv'd regular

gular and compleat. Now all this wonderful Diversity of Creatures arrive at a finish'd State ; Stones and Minerals, Vegetables and Animals, by degrees, grow up to the Perfection of their Species : But this cannot be affirm'd of Man, who in this Life never arrives at consummate Felicity. The most learned Philosopher knows nothing of the Works of Nature, in comparison of what he is intirely ignorant. The most Pious and Devout will own they are very defective, and come vastly short of that height of Vertue, at which they aim. All sorts of Men complain of Delusion and Disappointment ; when by prudent Schemes and industrious Application they have attain'd the Possession of Wealth or Power, or Pleasure, for which they contended, they are so far from acquiring the Rest and Satisfaction they expected, that they renew their Pursuits after the same Enjoyments with as great Vehemence as before. Place a Man in any Circumstances which himself shall desire, he will still be uneasy. The *Indies* will not satisfy the avaricious Miser, nor the vastest Empire the ambitious Monarch. Vain Man imagines, that in the tempting Object which he now seeks, he shall find his Happiness ; but when he possesses it, the beautiful Phantom mocks his Embraces, and proves in his Arms an empty Cloud. The World is a Scene of unsatisfy'd, complaining Men ; for such are the Faculties and Capacities of Human Nature, that no Objects here can compleatly gratify them. Hence justly is infer'd a Future State of Life, where Man shall attain the Felicity and Accomplishment of his Being ; for otherwise the Author must be deficient in Wisdom, Benevolence, or Power, who has made an intelligent Creature, that he either is unable, or unwilling, or knows not how to carry on to Perfection. And he that by this Argument is induc'd to believe a Future State, will soon embrace the Opinion of the Soul's Immortality.

THE next Medium I shall use to demonstrate the Soul's Immortality, shall be drawn from the Truth, and Faithfulness of the supream Lord and Governor of all Things.

IT has been already prov'd, that this Article of Belief has been universally receiv'd and profess'd by the Race of Mankind in all Ages of the World ; nor can the different Opinion of some impious Philosophers among the *Gentiles*, and the *Sadducees* among the *Jews*, before-mention'd, or a few modern irreligious Persons, any more invalidate this Assertion, than the appearance of some irregular and deform'd Productions can be pleaded against the common Course of Things, and the general Custom and Law of Nature ; for tho particular Individuals have been so stupid as to maintain, that the Soul perishes with the Body and mingles with common Matter, no more to be reviv'd ; yet Human Nature was never so infatuated, as to suffer this malignant Contagion to spread far among the Species. From the beginning of Time none ever read, or heard of a Nation of *Epicureans*, *Scepticks*, or *Sadducees*, who disbeliev'd a Future Existence ; which must therefore be an Opinion establish'd by the general Consent of Mankind.

IT is very certain that *Juvenal*, *Cicero*, *Plutarch*, *Epictetus*, and many other Moralists, have asserted, that many desperate Malefactors, tho they escap'd the Cognizance and Sentence of the Magistrate, have however been arraign'd and condemn'd at the secret Tribunal of Conscience in their own Breasts, and that Mankind in general, reflecting on their Guilt, felt inherent Terror and Remorse, and lay under tormenting Pangs and frightful Apprehensions of Divine Anger and Future Sufferings. They believ'd there was a Place of Punishment, where the Gods, by several ways, did execute their Wrath on impious Criminals ; where Furies, Wheels, Vipers, and Vultures, a sad variety of Pain and Vengeance, tormented the Unjust

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and Irreligious: While, on the contrary, it was their Opinion, that good and vertuous Men should, after Death, forget all their Sorrow, cease for ever from their Labour, and be convey'd to Seats of Happiness and endless Delight. And the Hopes and Expectations of this Future Felicity, inspir'd them with the love of Piety and sober Manners, and excited them to undertake many illustrious and heroick Actions, that in the next Life they might attain the Favour of the Gods and the Reward of Vertue. Since then by this Principle of the Soul's Immortality, Mankind have been mov'd and guided in their Actions, and this has been the chief Foundation of Religion and Vertue in the World, I thus Argue, That Principle or Article of Belief, by which God has actually govern'd the Race of Mankind from the beginning of Time, cannot be false: Now it is evident, that God has actually and constantly govern'd the World by this Belief and Expectation of a State of Immortality to come, and therefore that Principle must certainly be true: For since Mankind in all Times have been acted upon and excited by Arguments and Motives drawn from a Future State of Life, and the Supream Being has all along ruled the Minds of Men by the Belief and Expectation of Immortality; if notwithstanding this their should be no such State, then it will necessarily follow, that God has govern'd the rational World in all Ages by a Falshood and a meer Delusion. And thus to mock Mankind and act upon their Passions by an imaginary and feign'd State of Life in another World, is inconsistent with his perfect Truth and inviolable Faithfulness; and yet, if this impious Absurdity be not swallow'd, a Future State must be allow'd as certain.

IF it be objected, that the Supream Being does not rule the Minds of Men by the Expectations of Rewards and Punishments in another Life, but only permits Men to deceive themselves; I answer, First, that the Persons who thus deceive themselves, if indeed they

they are deluded, have always been the wisest, the most vertuous and excellent Men; for the Truth of which Assertion I appeal to the History and Observation of all Ages. Now it is not consistent with the Honour and Faithfulness of the Divine Being, to suffer those who most resemble his own excellent Nature, and do him the most eminent Service, to be constantly mov'd by a Delusion, to do those Actions by which they strive to imitate, serve, and please him.

AND from hence may be form'd a strong Argument against the *Scepticks*, with whom I am engag'd in this Disputation; for to any Man that reflects with Attention, it will appear incredible; that if the Immortality of the Soul be an imaginary and false Notion, that a God of infinite Goodness and Love to Mankind should not, by his gracious Providence, protect Men of Wisdom, Piety, and Vertue, that bear the nearest Conformity and Similitude to his own Perfections, and are most obedient to his Laws, from constantly falling into this Error, of believing a Future State, while the vilest and most flagitious Part of Mankind, whom from the perfect Purity of his Nature his Soul abhors, should be enlighten'd in this important Point, discover the Truth, and escape the great Mistake of the Soul's Immortality. It will be difficult to tell what is inconsistent with the infinite Goodness of the Supream Being, and his Regard and Benevolence to good Men, if this Supposition we have made be reconcil'd to that Divine Attribute.

FROM the Justice of God I thus argue, Those who believe that the Creator is likewise the Law-giver and Supream Judge of the World will agree, that Man is an accomptable Creature, and that one time he must appear before the high Tribunal of this Sovereign, to be absolv'd or condemn'd, and rewarded or punish'd for his Observance or Contempt of the Divine Laws. Now, as in Fact, there appears nothing in our present State like an equal Distribution

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of Rewards and Punishments, so it is impossible that a Man can be brought to an Account for the Actions of his Life, till his Life is ended. While we exist here we are under a State of Trial, nor can it be judg'd whether we have done our Duty till the Term of our Probation is expir'd; seeing then it cannot be decided how any Man has pass'd the Course of his Life till Death puts an end to it, and yet sometime or other he must come upon his Trial, it is evident, that there must be a State of Life after this, in which the Moderator and Judge of the World will vindicate the Honour and Justice of his Government, by an impartial Sentence upon all Men, according to their past Demeanour.

I F it appears by the Reasons which I have urg'd for the Soul's Immortality, that there is but a bare Probability of a Future Existence; the Inference will be strong and evident, that it is the Duty and Interest of every Man to act in Conformity to this Opinion, and so to demean himself that he may be happy, and not miserable, in this Eternal State that is likely to come. For since this Transient Life in Duration is but a Moment compar'd with vast Eternity, all Men who can reflect, will pronounce it highly reasonable, that since the Disproportion between this fleeting Life and endless Ages, is so immense and unconceivable, every one should be mov'd and govern'd by the probable Prospect of Everlasting Happiness and Misery, rather than by the Pleasures or Sufferings in this State of Mortality. And this is what is constantly practis'd by wise and considerate Men, who in various Instances part with some Things of Value, only from the Hopes of reaping a far greater Advantage; if it be prudent in the Affairs of this World, thus to govern our Actions, then we are evidently more oblig'd to neglect

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the Enjoyments of this World, from a probable Expectation of unlimited Felicity. Now if this be a clear Dictate of Reason, that a Man should, in the Course of his Life, be influenc'd by an Opinion of the Soul's Immortality, then he is bound by a Law of Nature, which is nothing else but the Will of the Supream Being, reveal'd to Man by the Light of Reason for the government of his Actions, so to regulate his Life, as if he were well assur'd of a Future State. Hence it will clearly follow, that if there be but a bare Probability of a Life to come, that the Author of our Beings has made it our Duty to act in conformity to that Opinion. And since by his infinite Perfections he is incapable of deceiving his Creatures, and making it their Duty to act upon imaginary and groundless Views, may not the Certainty of the Soul's immortal Duration be hence infer'd.

OBJECTIONS *against the* SOUL'S IMMORTALITY.

AGAINST the Immateriality, and consequently the Immortality of the Soul, some superficial Philosophers, and loose Wits their Admirers, bring this Objection, That an incorporeal Substance implies a Contradiction; so Mr. *Dryden* says it appears to him, in a Dedication to Sir *Charles Sidley*: And if these Gentlemen had vouchsaf'd to have given any Proof of their Position in a Matter of such Importance, it could by no means have been look'd on as an unbecoming Condescension. How it came to pass that they thought they should be believ'd upon their bare Assertion, without offering the least Evidence, I must acknowledge I cannot imagine.

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IT is plain, that these low Pretenders to Reason take the Idea of Substance and Matter for the same, looking on those Words as Synonymous; and if it were so, it would plainly follow, that an incorporeal Body would be an inconsistent Conception, and one Term would destroy the other; but why will they produce no Argument to evince the Truth of their Opinion, and make it appear that all Substance is Body. In this Discourse the Existence of a Deity, the Maker of all Things, is suppos'd to be granted; and unless they insist, that the Supream Being is a Material and not a Spiritual Substance, then the Idea of an Incorporeal Substance has nothing in it absurd and impossible, as I have had an Occasion to mention before. And should it be granted, that the Soul is a Corporeal Being, yet this would not hinder but that it might still be Immortal; for if their Master *Epicurus* or *Aristotle* are of any Authority in this Debate, it is evident, that both these look'd on the Gods as Corporeal, and yet affirm'd they were Eternal. And if these Gentlemen, their Followers, allow a Corporeal Deity, they will notwithstanding grant that he is Immortal. But there is no reason to carry this Argument farther; for what is advanc'd with great Confidence, but without Proof, ought to be rejected as unworthy of an Answer.

ANOTHER Objection to the Doctrine of the Immaterial and consequently Incorruptable Substance of Human Souls, is this, that the Souls of Brute Animals are Incorporeal, and notwithstanding are not Immortal, but are allow'd to be of a perishing Nature. It has been the almost universal Opinion of Men of Learning and celebrated Judgment in past Times, that the Bodies of Brutes were enliven'd by a vital Principal of a superior Nature to that of Matter. And those ingenious *Corpuscularians*, who

of late thought fit to revive and polish the obsolete and decry'd Hypothesis of *Democritus* and *Epicurus*, and will not allow to Brutes an incorporeal, vital Spring of Sensation, seem rather to affect a Sport of Wit and Imagination, than a solid Scheme of Philosophy.

I MUST acknowledge, that I look upon the Souls of brute Creatures as Immaterial ; for I cannot conceive how an internal Principle of Sensitive Perception and Local Motion can be fram'd of Matter, tho ever so subtile and refin'd, and modify'd with the most artful Contrivance. And I challenge the most accute Philosopher to assign any specifical Character, that will essentially diversify and distinguish an Animal from a Watch, a Puppet, or any other curious Engine, if the vital Principle that informs the Animal be not Incorporeal ; for the implex Contrivance, the curious Disposition and Minuteness of the Parts, will by no means vary the Species ; a Clock of the smallest Size, with wonderful Diversity of minute Springs and Movements, and great Variety of lasting Motions, does not differ in Kind from a plain one of the largest Dimension, that has but one simple Motion, and that of short Continuance.

WHENCE it will follow, that according to the Philosophy of the Atomists, and their manner of accounting for sensitive Operations by the Impulse of outward Objects made upon the Organs of the Body, and the Collision, Conflict and Reaction of Matter upon Matter, an Animal is nothing else but an Admirable Machine and a curious Invention, that imitates exactly the Principle of Sensation in Man ; but in reality is nothing but an excellent Piece of Machanism, that represents and mimicks in a surprizing Manner the Perceptions of Human Souls : And indeed the Imitation is so perfect,

fect, that we may be as sure that a Beast has as real Sensation, as we are that any other Men besides our selves are endow'd with that Principle : For what can be alledg'd to demonstrate the Truth of other Mens Sensation, which I my self do not feel, than what will as effectually prove, that Brute Animals are likewise sensitive Beings, the Operations of such Powers being as fully evident as they are in Man, and often more perfect.

THO the Souls of Brute Animals are allow'd to be Incorporeal, yet they are plainly of a base and low Nature, and destitute of those intellectual Faculties and free Choice that should make them Subjects of Moral Government, enable them to discern the Obligation of Laws and the Distinction of Vertue and Vice, and understand the Notion of being an accountable Creature, and receiving Rewards and Punishments. Hence it follows, that they are intirely incapable of the Felicity of a Rational Soul in the Fruition of the Divine Being, whom they are unable to contemplate, love, admire, and adore : and from this it is evident that the Author and Lord of Nature has signify'd his Will, that he does not intend them for perpetual Duration, in that Sense which we mean, when we speak of the Soul's Immortality, that is, its eternal Continuance in a State of Happiness or Misery ; for to what purpose can it be suppos'd, that the Souls of Brutes should be destin'd to endless Duration, if after the Dissolution of the Body they have no Faculties, Capacities, or Operations, like those of the Soul of Man, that can give them the like Delight and Felicity ?

BUT I answer, in the second place, That supposing the Souls of Brutes are Immaterial, and that they continue after Death, since they are endow'd with no nobler Principle than that of Sensation, and since that must depend upon the use of proper Organs

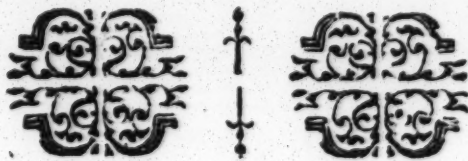
gans, it being impossible to conceive an Idea of Seeing and Hearing, if one divests it from its Relation to an Eye or an Ear, it will follow, that the Souls of Brutes after Death, must remain inactive and insensible, for want of those necessary Organs by which they exerted their Operations when vitally united to the Body, on whose Frame and Disposition it was wholly dependent in its Actions.

BUT whether the Animal Souls in a State of Separation remain Stupid and asleep, or whether they are dispers'd thro the Creation and employ'd to animate other Beings, or return to one common Element whence they were at first deriv'd, is unreveal'd; but this is certain, that, which ever of these is true, the Souls of Brutes are not design'd by the great Creator for such a Life of Pleasure and Happiness as that of Human Souls in a State of Immortality and Perfection, for the Enjoyment of which they have no Dispositions and Capacities. And tho we should not be able clearly to account for the Nature of Brute Animals, and how their Souls are dispos'd of by their Maker after Death, yet our uncertainty in this Point will by no means weaken the Force of those Demonstrations that have been produc'd for the Immortality of Human Souls.

3 IT is farther Objected against the Immortality of the Soul, that it plainly relies in its Operations on the Temper and Disposition of the Body; that its Faculties are exerted with different Degrees of Vivacity and Perfection in the feeble State of Infancy the Vigour of Youth and the Decays of old Age; that they are suspended or disturb'd by Sleep, and quite subverted by Lunacy or the stroke of an Apoplexy; that they are enfeebled by languishing Sickness, and interrupted by Fury and other violent Passions; and therefore must be allow'd

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low'd to be dependent on the Body which it animates. To this I answer, that during the vital Complication of the Soul and Body the first uses the instrumental Assistance of the last ; but this does not prove that the superior essential Faculties of the Mind are incapable of exercising their Operations in a State of Separation ; for those do not depend on Corporeal Organs, as the Principle of Sensation does ; what mechanical Frame is necessary to Understanding, Reflection, Argumentation, and Memory ? What secret Wheels, what Re-active and Elastick Springs and Movements communicate to the Soul its Self determining Power, or Liberty of Will ? Can the organical Contrivance be explain'd, by which a Man is fram'd a Moral and Religious Animal ; by which he discerns the Beauty of Virtue and the Turpitude and Danger of Vice, and by which he is mov'd to aim at the Felicity and Perfection of his Nature, in his Resemblance and Fruition of the Supream Being ? It cannot be deny'd, but these Operations may be perform'd without the Body, since our Conceptions of these does not, like that of Sensation, include the Idea of any material Organ to which they relate ; and therefore tho the Objection proves a vital Union of the Soul and Body, it cannot be thence infer'd, that the superior Faculties of the Mind are incapable of acting in a State of Separation.



F I N I S.



